

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF

SIX
GREAT
JAMAICANS

By


W. Adolphe Roberts

JORDON
GORDON
LOVE
NUTTALL
REDCAM
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SIX GREAT JAMAICANS



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W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS



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ILLUSTRATIONS

COVER DESIGN FROM STATUE OF EDWARD JORDON

PORTRAITS OF THE SIX GREAT JAMAICANS

Dedicated to
MY FATHER
ADOLPHUS S. ROBERTS
WHO FIRST TAUGHT ME TO
LOVE HISTORY AND
ENCOURAGED ME TO
WRITE IT

FOREWORD

WHAT is a Jamaican? In another place I have expressed it that "any people that has seen its generations come and go on the same soil for centuries is, in fact, a nation," and I find no reason to change that definition. A man or woman born here is in a very real sense a Jamaican and not an Englishman, no matter what may be the political relationship of the Island with the British Commonwealth. He is entitled to national pride in the achievements of the gifted among his compatriots.

But the native-born are not the only Jamaicans. The individual who comes here at no matter what age, shows his love of the country and devotes the rest of his life to its service is also a Jamaican, in the larger sense. He becomes one of us, as the career official or the absentee landlord can never be, and if his talents are outstanding he can properly be listed as a great Jamaican.

Of the six personalities chosen for treatment in this volume, Edward Jordon, George William Gordon, Thomas Henry MacDermot and Herbert George de Lisser were born in Jamaica, Archbishop Enos Nuttall in England, and Dr. Robert Love in the Bahamas. So completely did the two last-named identify themselves with the local pattern that in their declining years it was taken for granted by the average Jamaican that they were native-born.


There could be no more impressive tribute to the quality of their service.

The six have not been chosen haphazardly. Considered together their lives exemplify the chief trends in Jamaican history for a century and a quarter, from the fight for the abolition of slavery to the eve of the present self-government movement. I do not maintain that they are the six greatest, but they are all of first importance: Jordon, the constructive statesman and voice of the educated coloured element; Gordon, the misunderstood nationalist and defender of the submerged masses; Nuttall, the churchman of genius; Love, in a profound sense the advocate of the people; MacDermot (Tom Redcam), the idealistic journalist and poet; de Lisser, the glittering prose writer and conservative.

W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS.



Edward Jordon

 HE Jamaica where Edward Jordon was born on December 6, 1800, and grew to manhood was an island disturbed by economic problems and experiencing the early symptoms of a profound social unrest. War with Napoleonic France raged through most of the first fifteen years of the Nineteenth Century, which were also Jordon's first fifteen years. The sugar cargoes to Europe were in constant danger, and while those that reached port commanded a high price so many ships were lost that the industry on the whole was unprofitable. England abolished the slave trade in 1807, and the United States followed suit in 1808. The planters argued that this reform made it more expensive for them to grow sugar, but the truth was that slave labour in general could no longer show dividends for the masters. Cane sugar from Asia and the new beet sugar competed at lower prices. So when the wars ended after Waterloo, Jamaica found itself in a bad way commercially.

The American and French Revolutions, the successful struggle of the blacks of Haiti to win their independence, and the revolts against Spain led by Simón Bolívar in Latin America had given all peoples a fresh outlook concerning democracy and the rights of man. Yet Jamaica lived under civil disabilities of the most oppressive sort. The vote was confined to a couple of thousand

men of property. The free coloured people could not vote or hold office; they were not even allowed to give evidence in their own defence, under oath in court. No minister of any sect save the Anglican Church could preach religion to a slave. And no slave, in any circumstances, could teach or preach without permission from his owner and from the magistrates at quarter session.

Edward Jordon was a light-coloured freeman. His father, also named Edward, had come to the Island from Barbados, where it is interesting to note that his progressive views had caused him to be regarded as a dangerous character. His wife was named Grace, but whether she was a Jamaican or a Barbadian is not clear.

We first hear of the younger Edward Jordon as an apprentice to a firm of tailors at Harbour and Church Streets, Kingston, which later became well-known as Cripps, Scott & Company. In starting life at this calling, Jordon resembled Andrew Johnson, eight years his junior, who succeeded Abraham Lincoln in the presidency of the United States. But Jordon did not remain long a tailor. Next door to his shop stood Aikman's Printery, and the friendship he struck up there with an apprentice named Robert Osborn undoubtedly helped to shape his real interests, which ran to journalism and political action. The Aikmans, father and son, were the public printers.

Various eulogies pronounced after Jordon's death contained the assertion that there was nothing to be said about his youth, since it had not been remarkable. Interior evidence shows that he must have been precocious, a lad who made the utmost of his limited education and impressed others with his ability. Jordon's own modesty accounts for the lack of early reminiscences. He never

boasted, and he discouraged friends who tried to sing his praises.

He was only twenty when he became a fighting reformer. Characteristically he approached the problems in a lucid and practical way. Slavery was the major evil, but if he and other free coloured men were to be effective in the campaign to abolish it, the first step was to obtain full civil rights for his class. Word-of-mouth support of the Anti-Slavery Society led by Wilberforce and Buxton in England had its uses, and Jordon gave it. But a local society that planned resistance to the oppression of coloured people claimed his best energies.

The initial activities of the society were secret. It appears to have been founded in 1820. Several persons declined when asked to take the perilous job of secretary. Then the elder Jordon proposed his son, and young Edward immediately accepted. We shall fail to understand this remarkable man if we think of him as a revolutionist. He was motivated by a profound love of country, of liberty and of human justice, and to these causes he remained unswervingly loyal to the end of his life. But he detested racial fanaticism, either white or black. He took it for granted that Jamaica would remain under the English flag. He was prepared to be a moderate, tending to conservatism, once basic wrongs had been corrected.

The secret correspondence dealing with the aims of Jordon's civil-rights society was detected. The ruling caste regarded it as a conspiracy and used every means to crush it. According to James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball, the authors of a book published in the next decade, entitled *EMANCIPATION IN THE WEST INDIES*, "per-

suasions and intimidations were used privately, and when they failed public persecutions were resorted to, under the form of judicial procedures. Among the mildest means was the dismissal of clerks, agents, etc., from the employ of white men." Jordon was then chief clerk in the store of James Bryden, who wrote him a letter two lines long, summarily discharging him for his "political sentiments." The young man's reply was also in two lines and contained merely the sarcastic statement that he regretted he and his employer must separate on account of "political sentiments."

Three years later the society was strong enough to file a petition with the House of Assembly, asking for full participation by free people of colour in the political life of the Island. This was rejected by a series of resolutions. Certain rights, however, including that of the oath in court, were conceded in 1824. The society sent Richard Hill and Alexander Dawson Simpson, both prominent men of mixed blood, to present the original petition in England. Hill and Simpson were allowed within the Bar of the House of Commons, in 1827. While they were heard sympathetically, Parliament did not feel that it could interfere with the workings of the Jamaica Constitution in the matter.

There is but faint memory of those times in Jamaica today, and almost no understanding of Jordon's part in them. The 1820s are thought of hazily as the period when the rich planters and merchants resisted the Emancipation movement, talked of seceding from Britain if they did not get their way, and persecuted the missionaries who were trying to help the slaves. The battle to end civil disabilities is largely forgotten. So is the aid

given to the cause of humanity by the free coloured element and even by some liberals, both lay and clerical, among the whites. The picture has to be pieced together from imperfect records.

Edward Jordon could agitate his views openly in just one way, and that was by starting a newspaper. Apparently he and his friend Osborn, also coloured, had long discussed the possibility. It could be done comparatively cheaply, for newspapers were then small in size, were set by hand and printed on simple flatbed presses worked by man-power. They were not expected to publish much news beyond shipping and commercial information, brief accounts of important local happenings, letters from correspondents, and reprints from English journals. Their chief reason for existence was the editorial page, fortified by one or at the most two special articles. A man could run a weekly by himself. A staff of three or four sufficed for a daily. Newspapers of the sort are still issued in Latin-American countries. They are organs of opinion that owe their following to the vital nature of the campaigns they wage, and to the personality of the editor.

But Jordon and Osborn found it hard to raise even the limited capital needed. They had to support themselves, in the face of growing difficulties with employers. Osborn continued as a journeyman printer for several years. After he had been dismissed by the shop-keeper Bryden, we find Jordon holding odd jobs and trying to free himself of bosses. He once ran a liquor shop at the southeast corner of East and Tower Streets. He and Osborn established one of the first bookstores in the Island; it began in a very small way, but grew steadily. At last, in the *Supplement* of the ROYAL GAZETTE, dated

September 27 to October 4, 1828, Jordon advertised that in October he intended to publish a daily paper, to be entitled the *WATCHMAN*.

The plan proved to be altogether too ambitious. I have not been able to discover a copy of the first issue of the *WATCHMAN*. Volume 1, Number 21, however, is dated September 9, 1829. As it was a semi-weekly issued on Wednesdays and Saturdays, we may presume that the venture had been launched about the first of July. The name had become the *WATCHMAN AND JAMAICA FREE PRESS*, though the second part was not used in everyday talk and was eventually dropped.

This little paper made history. It had to cope with an act the Legislature had seen fit to pass, which decreed the death penalty for all persons convicted of printing any publication declared (by jury and judge) to be dangerous or seditious.

Meanwhile there had been a minor slave rebellion in 1824, and almost simultaneously the Baptist Missionary Society began serious evangelical work in Jamaica. The Rev. Thomas Burchell and the Rev. James Mursell Philippo arrived about 1823 and the Rev. William Knibb in 1825. They enlarged the work of missions existing at Montego Bay and Falmouth, and they established stations at Kingston, Spanish Town and Annotto Bay. The local end of the crusade for Emancipation could be told by means of the stories of these brave, self-sacrificing ministers. Some other Jamaican historian will surely give them their due. I prefer to cover the subject through the native-born Edward Jordon.

He naturally praised in the *WATCHMAN* the work of the missionaries, and though himself an Anglican he op-

posed the reactionary Colonial Church Union which was formed to defend slavery, uphold the Anglicans and Presbyterians, and smash Dissenters. True to the logic of his programme, however, he gave first place to the fight on civil disabilities. Most newspaper writing was anonymous then. You will not find Jordon's signature in the early numbers of the *WATCHMAN*. But it can be taken for granted that the more forceful articles and leaders were by him. Robert Osborn was primarily the business manager.

Personal organs opposed to reform existed simultaneously. Chief among these were the *COURANT* and the *CHRONICLE*. The first-named was controlled by Augustus Hardin Beaumont, a firebrand who played an important role in Jordon's resounding clash with the law. Beaumont had been born in the United States, but was elected a member for Westmoreland in the House of Assembly without his citizenship having been called into question. On September 12, 1829, a letter signed "Twig" appeared on the front page of the *WATCHMAN*, in which Beaumont was described as a "Hop-o-My-Thumb North American" and a "pigmy alien" who advocated the transferring of Jamaica's allegiance to the United States.

On October 31, another front-page letter, this one signed "A Colonist," took the form of an address to the House of Assembly challenging Beaumont's right to his seat, and in the paper's *Supplement* of the same date Jordon commented as follows: "The charge of disaffection to his Majesty's Crown and Government may be proved in a variety of ways against Augustus Hardin Beaumont, but particularly through the columns of the *COURANT* newspaper, of which he professes himself the 'ostensible

editor'. . . We conceive it proper and necessary to drag before the public in all his moral and constitutional deformity Augustus Hardin Beaumont, the would-be Member of Assembly."

Apparently by obtaining emergency papers of naturalization, Beaumont continued to sit, but Jordon's opinion of him did not improve for at least two years. Under date of January 8, 1831, Jordon wrote of "the far-famed COURANT, the vehicle of everything that is low, scurrilous and dirty." Afterward, in the face of the fairly serious slave rebellion late in 1831, Beaumont began to take a more reasonable stand. This was interpreted by the CHRONICLE as treachery, a secret alliance between Jordon and Beaumont, and involving the acceptance by both men of Anti-Slavery Society funds from England. Journalistic insults flew back and forth in accordance with the blunt manners of the day.

The climax was reached with an editorial published by the WATCHMAN in the issue of April 7, 1832. It was headed "The Chronicle" and consisted of a jeering attack on that paper's editor, James Lunan, also a Common Councillor of Kingston, who was addressed throughout as "James" and "Master James." The style is not suggestive of Jordon, who was out of town that week. Usually only one phrase is quoted: "Knock off the fetters, and let the oppressed go free." But the whole final paragraph should be studied. It reads as follows:

"The report which James has sworn, and which we strongly suspect originated with himself, is false. Mr. Beaumont is not a contributor to this paper. If he were we would fearlessly avow it. Our columns, hear it silly lad, are as open to Mr. Beaumont as to any other

gentleman in the Island of Jamaica. Ours is a 'free press, as free for the Member for Westmoreland as for the one for Saint Catherine. There was a period when we were opposed to the former; that period has gone by; and although the silly boy imagines that by a report such as the one he has given publicity to, he will injure us, he is mistaken. We have been consistent throughout, and now that the Member for Westmoreland has come over to our side, we shall be happy with him, and the other friends of humanity, to give a long pull, a strong pull and a pull together, until we bring the system down by the run—knock off the fetters, and let the oppressed go free. Now, James there's a declaration for you, my boy. Make a similar one, and—you will be a beggar in a week."

The very next issue of the WATCHMAN ran comment in which one hears the ring of Jordon's voice. Note the stylistic difference: "We have been repeatedly taunted with being opposed to the *'best interests of the island*. If to stand boldly forward as the consistent advocates of the rights of humanity—if to put forward our best energies to stem the torrent of the heartless and revolting oppressors of the wretched and defenceless slaves, and hold them up to the execration of the virtuous and humane—if to do this be really in contravention of *the best interests of the island*, we at once plead guilty to the charge; and we further declare, in the most unequivocal manner, that we shall not fail, as often as opportunity may serve, to repeat these 'high crimes and misdemeanors.'"

Further on, the editor speaks of "that heterogeneous combination of intolerance, arrogance and imbecile folly—that many-headed monster, begotten by the far-famed

Parson B. . . . [George Wilson Bridges, the historian and rector of St. Ann's,] suckled by that respectable jade Mother *Courant*," etc., etc., the main reference being to the Colonial Church Union. He alludes bitingly to his own "seditious" and "dingy" WATCHMAN, speaks of "a supposed connection between the Member for Westmoreland and ourselves," and finally scourges "the impertinence of the most senseless of all beings, the *Courant* editor."

However Jordon may have felt about Beaumont, he was not reconciled to the COURANT. The latter was then edited by one Bruce, though Beaumont was believed still to have considerable influence over its policy.

Meanwhile a complaint had been filed against the WATCHMAN for the editorial containing the phrase, "Knock off the fetters, etc." He went to the court as a reporter for his paper, was then and there arrested and charged in his capacity of editor with the crimes of sedition and treason. If convicted he could be sentenced to death under the provisions of the recent law already referred to.

There took place a diversion which goes unmentioned in the schoolbooks from which Jamaican children are taught history. The Attorney General, an appointee of the Crown, was an Irishman named Fitz Herbert Batty. He promptly stood up and refused to indict Edward Jordon for treason. Batty declared that his own country, Ireland, was at that time panting for even freedom of religion, and he could not conscientiously undertake the prosecution of one who was struggling for political and domestic emancipation. Jordon had written nothing that Daniel O'Connell would not have written, and he, Batty, was a sympathizer with Daniel O'Connell.

The sensation that these words caused in court may be imagined. The case was turned over to an assistant named Panton, who handled it with zest. Batty, who incidentally had become a large landowner in Jamaica, was not removed from his post. He held it until the following year, when he resigned and was succeeded, strange to say, by an almost equally liberal Irishman named Dowell O'Reilly.

Jordon was brought to trial on April 17. He had not signed the offending editorial, but since January 1, 1831, his name had appeared prominently on the front page of the *WATCHMAN*, with the declaration that he was "the *only* responsible Editor of this Paper." This seemed unanswerable. Yet his lawyer adroitly argued that a blanket assumption of responsibility did not make him legally guilty if he had not written the article and had not been present when it was ordered printed. The burden of proof that he had done those two things lay with the Crown. The accused himself would stand upon his rights and refuse to testify.

According to lurid annals of the times, a frigate trained its guns upon the city and troops were held in readiness for fear of an uprising in case Jordon received the death penalty. The courtroom was said to be crowded with free men of colour, armed and prepared to act. It is true that there was a plot to rescue him by force, but it could not have been taken very seriously. The government realized that it had a weak case. The judge cut the proceedings short by instructing the jury to acquit for lack of evidence.

There was another card up Acting Attorney General Panton's sleeve. While the uproar over "Knock off the

fetters" was at its height the Rev. James Wordie, of the Scotch Kirk, Kingston, had joined in the attack, and the WATCHMAN had answered him without mincing words. A sufficient idea of the controversy may be gained from this paragraph by Jordon:

"We are informed that this *truly worthy* disciple of the great and good John Knox—this minister of the Prince of Peace—this conscientious preacher of forgiveness of injuries and good will among men, has, with a degree of Christian piety which does honour to his character, both as a man and a clergyman, declared 'that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see us hanged.'"

Though he had been countering cruel and defamatory statements, Jordon was charged with libel, was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for twelve months and to pay a fine of £100. An appeal was made through the Colonial Secretary to the Law Offices of the Crown, which handed down a reversal of judgment. The fine was cancelled and the sentence remitted, but when released Jordon had already served six months of the twelve.

He now took the most extreme action of his career. He issued a fiery circular in which he revealed facts about the secret society that had been working against the civil disabilities of the free coloured people. According to one authority, he "demanded the instant repeal of every restrictive law, the removal of every disability, and the extension of complete political equality, declaring that if the demand were not complied with, the whole coloured population would rise in arms, would proclaim freedom to their own slaves, instigate the slaves generally to rebellion, and then shout war and wage it, until the streets of Kingston should run blood."

I have not seen an original copy of the circular, but the evidence as to its contents is too impressive to be discarded. The Legislature passed an act conceding all that had been asked for. This as a sequel to the slave revolt of 1831, the burning of Nonconformist chapels by the agents of the Colonial Church Union, and the WATCHMAN trials. This on the eve of general Emancipation. Edward Jordan had won a signal triumph. His people enthusiastically called him "the Untitled Ruler of a Ransomed Race."

It is proper to add that the House of Assembly did not believe that Emancipation was a certainty, that it was preoccupied mainly with thwarting the chief reform, and that it probably granted relief to the free coloured men in the hope of making allies of them. In the same spirit the Assembly had agreed to removing the civil disabilities of the Jews of Jamaica.

New elections were held late in 1832, but Jordan was still too entangled in legal complications to contest a seat. The new House was just as bitter against reform as its predecessor had been. On October 15, 1833, the Governor, the Earl of Mulgrave, laid before the Assembly the Act for the Abolition of Slavery which had passed the English Parliament, and the struggle continued until December when the Assembly gave way. Jamaican readers will hardly need to be reminded that the bill which was ratified gave liberty, as of August 1, 1834, to children up to the age of six, and set a term of apprenticeship for the rest of the slave population: six years for field hands and four years for house servants.

Jordan, along with the missionaries and all liberals took the stand that the apprenticeship system was unjust, in fact a continuation of slavery under another name. He

worked to end it as quickly as possible, the WATCHMAN being at first his principal forum. Then in 1835 the House of Assembly was again dissolved. Jordon stood for a seat from Kingston and won a great victory. Along with him were elected three other coloured men, including his partner Robert Osborn. In the filling of a vacancy they were joined presently by Richard Hill of Spanish Town, one of the best-educated and most accomplished men of colour in Jamaica, the associate of all ranks of society. Hill had travelled widely, spoke and wrote in French as well as English, and was a distinguished naturalist.

The fewness of the leaders available may be judged by some of the candidates returned by the small electorate in 1835. Jordon and his attorney Watkis in the WATCHMAN case were two of Kingston's three members. Osborn won in St. Andrew along with Joseph Gordon, the father of George William Gordon. James Bryden, the merchant who had discharged Jordon for his political sentiments, was one of the members for St. David, the former Attorney General Fitz Herbert Batty one of those for St. Catherine.

Jordon's group, strengthened by a handful of white adherents, came to be known as the Town Party in the Assembly, while the majority composed of conservative planters and merchants was called the Country Party. It was a natural division of radicals and reactionaries, and the tense campaigns of the remaining thirty-one years of the life of the Assembly were waged between them.

Efforts to shorten the apprenticeship system proved successful. The experience of Antigua served as a help-



HON. EDWARD JORDON

ful object lesson, for in that island the Legislature had voted for outright freedom and the relationship between former masters and slaves had been all the better for it. The decision was finally taken in Jamaica to end bondage in any form on August 1, 1838. Disorders had been predicted, but they did not materialize. The most dramatic celebration was probably the one held in William Knibb's church in Falmouth, where at a midnight ceremony Knibb shouted when the clock struck twelve: "The monster is dead! The Negro is free!" The following morning J. M. Philippo conducted services outside the Baptist Chapel, Spanish Town, for 7,000 newly freed slaves. They were joined by 2,000 children from the schools. Kingston also celebrated jubilantly and peacefully.

Jordon was now able to devote himself to problems of statesmanship affecting the whole community. When he entered the Assembly it had been at once noted, even by his adversaries, that he was no mere agitator: that he fought simply for human rights and was not looking for an opportunity to overthrow the Government. He first won confidence, then respect, and in the long run high esteem. An idea of his attitude toward citizenship may be gained from his earliest activities after entering official life. We find him in 1835, the year of his election, becoming a vestryman for the parish of St. Andrew, a lieutenant in the Kingston militia, and an assistant judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Kingston. He also branched out as a businessman, became manager of the Kingston Savings Bank in 1839 and a director of the Planters' Bank in 1841. Two years later he accepted a commission as lieutenant in the St. Andrew militia.

His prestige and power had been solidified in 1838

by his founding of a daily newspaper, the MORNING JOURNAL, the first issue of which appeared on April 10 that year. His prospectus was couched in temperate language. The time was ripe for an honest, competently edited new daily in Jamaica, he wrote, and that was what he intended to provide. The WATCHMAN would cease publication, but its spirit would live in its successor, with modifications as befitted a calmer period. The appeal of the MORNING JOURNAL proved to be general, and it met with great success. This motto appeared every day on its editorial page:

*What'er men do, or say, or think, or dream,
Our motley paper seizes for its theme.*

Thome and Kimball, the authors already quoted, give an interesting account of attending a session of the police court, presided over by Jordon with a black alderman as his associate. They were impressed by his fairness and his cool air of authority; he was notably effective in dealing with some white American sailors, a few of them Southerners, who had been charged with disorderly conduct. The Southerners had never before seen a coloured magistrate and they rebelled at being tried by one. They were handled with a suavity and sense of humour that quickly brought them to order.

It is out of the question for me, in the space at my disposal, to describe Jordon's later career in as much detail as I have given to his fight against civil disabilities and slavery. He was to fill several important offices and to show his outstanding talent as an administrator and leader. I hold that it is sounder in a short biographical sketch to emphasize the early years of struggle, when character reveals itself, than to slur these over in favour

of the riper years. A man may grow more conservative, but his personality is formed in youth.

Jordon was an active and useful legislator throughout the 1840s. This was a period of serious economic difficulties, following the adoption of Free Trade by Britain and the consequent removal of customs duties that had favoured Jamaican sugar. Without having to give up his seat in the Assembly, Jordon became Mayor of Kingston in 1854 and was also appointed Custos. Until then the same man had never held both offices. The Governor broke the rule for the express purpose of marking his confidence in Jordon. A still greater honour was accorded almost immediately.

Sir Henry Barkly had arrived as Governor in 1853, bringing an extension of the Constitution which created an Executive Committee not unlike the one that exists today. It was an embryo cabinet, to include three local members. Barkly said frankly that he advocated for Jamaica, "a strong executive administration, consisting of upright and intelligent men chosen from among her own citizens." First on his list of appointees in 1854 was Edward Jordon. The latter thought it proper to resign his seat and ask for a popular vote of confidence. He was returned without opposition. On the later occasions when he was called to the Executive Committee he did not seek re-election, but held his seat without a break until the House was abolished. He was also Mayor of Kingston until the suppression of the city's charter in 1866.

The ironical fact must be noted that about 1853 a new weekly called the WATCHMAN, with which he had no connection, was established. This paper was acquired in 1858 or 1859 by George William Gordon.

Jordon was made a Companion of the Bath by Queen Victoria in 1860. Replying to a congratulatory address at that time, he wrote: "The distinction conferred upon me by our gracious Queen is the more highly prized because it is the first instance that I am aware of in which a native of the island has been thus honoured and affords evidence that distance from the source of honour is no bar to advancement—and that the public services of individuals in this portion of her Majesty's dominions will certainly be observed, and in due time acknowledged."

From 1861 to 1864 Jordon was Speaker of the House of Assembly. He often took the floor, however, and never compromised with his convictions. Addressing the Assembly on November 17, 1863, he cried boldly: "I say that this House should not abandon its rights and privileges to the Colonial Secretary." He asked the House to remember that the Governor "is only the mouth-piece of the Colonial Secretary," the official to whom he referred being the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Speaking on a bill, December 22, 1863, Jordon declared that no one should be elected to the Assembly who was not able to vote freely. He alluded scornfully to members who were "Government servants" and forced to vote on the side of the administration.

During a recess of the Legislature he was appointed Receiver General to fill a vacancy caused by death. Shortly afterwards he was made Governor's Secretary and then Island Secretary, the post last-named corresponding to the present office of Colonial Secretary. This rise to a position of authority previously reserved for white men came to him during the governorship of Edward John Eyre.

But all was not well with Jamaica. Civil war in the United States since 1861 had adversely affected the Island's commerce. Owing to its distance from the Confederate ports, Jamaica did not even benefit from the blockade-running that made the fortunes of so many merchants in the Bahamas and Bermuda. The economic state of the peasantry had become increasingly bad. Work was scarce and wages low. There had been a catastrophic succession of droughts in many parishes, St. Thomas in the East being one of those hardest hit. The majority in the Assembly maintained an attitude of callous indifference toward the sufferings of the people. To crown it all, Eyre was an egotistic, contentious and **thoroughly** bad governor, who seemed incapable of grasping the problems which it was his duty to **try** to solve.

In the ensuing sketch I shall survey the events leading up to and growing out of the tragic Morant Bay affair. So little need be said about them now. Jordon had no responsibility for them, although he was a high government official. His secretarial post made him almost an automaton, in view of Eyre's frenzied personal handling of the crisis. This was unfortunate for Jamaica, because if he had been given a chance to act Jordon would assuredly have served as a brake on the Governor.

Jordon disapproved of the acts of violence committed by both sides in St. Thomas, but he could not speak out while holding his post and he refused to add to the general confusion by resigning. Some notion of his feeling may be judged from the editorials of the **MORNING JOURNAL**. Both he and Osborn had disassociated themselves from the paper, yet no one doubted that it reflect-

ed the opinions of the leader of the Town Party. Immediately after the outbreak the MORNING JOURNAL commended "the promptness, zeal and discretion" of Eyre. Within a few weeks it was using such terms as "the massacres in St. Thomas" and supporting the enquiry by a royal commission into his conduct; it was printing evidence favourable to the motives of Gordon.

Then came the death of the Constitution by voluntary action of the House of Assembly, urged on by the Governor, and the reducing of Jamaica to Crown Colony status. Again Jordon held aloof. It is significant that Osborn voted with the narrow majority that brought about the change. Apparently Jordon held at the time that direct control by England was needed to safeguard the peasants, while the panic-stricken planters and merchants wanted such control because they feared fresh uprisings by the blacks. It was a curious paradox. Before long Jordon concluded that the price paid had been too high.

With the change of government under Sir John Peter Grant, the office of Colonial Secretary of Jamaica became a perquisite of Englishmen. Jordon, however, was specially retained as Island Secretary until his death, which occurred on February 8, 1869, after a short illness, at his home Good Air, Halfway Tree Road. On his deathbed he told his wife to take his insignia of a Companion of the Bath to King's House, remarking: "I give it back as it came to me. I never wore it."

His body lay in state for two hours at Wolmer's schoolroom, then at Church Street and the Parade. It was carried to the Kingston Parish Church for the funeral services and buried in the churchyard beside the north doorway.

In its obituary the GLEANER wrote of him as "one in whom the love of country was supreme . . . The plain, meek, mild-spoken, kind-tempered, unobtrusive, aye, retiring Edward Jordon . . . Men differed from his political views, but those who differed most entertained as high a regard for him as those that differed not at all."

Later that year a meeting was held in the Court House to decide on a memorial to Jordon. Some wanted a philanthropic institution, but the Rev. John Radcliffe, the well-known Presbyterian minister and poet, carried the day when he pleaded: "I say, gentlemen, let us have Edward Jordon in marble, so that generations yet unborn may point to it."

The statue, the work of R. G. Miller, R.A., was unveiled on East Parade on March 30, 1875. The chief address was made by the Honourable Lewis Quier Bowerbank, a former Custos of Kingston, of whom we shall hear much — and in a very different mood — in connection with the Morant Bay Rebellion. Note carefully the following words by Dr. Bowerbank:

"A lasting memorial of a people's appreciation of the worth of the departed, and may it prove an incentive to our young men to strive to follow in the steps of Edward Jordon . . . and thus, by moral force, compel the revocation of that galling and oppressive restriction which at present excludes a Jamaican, however well qualified otherwise, from filling *permanently* the higher offices of trust in Jamaica. Should the erection of this statue, or the proceedings of this day, tend in any way to promote this object, then indeed will it prove a memorial worthy of the late Edward Jordon, for this restriction was one which embittered the latest days of his existence and


sorely vexed the loyalty and patriotism of a man himself honoured by his Sovereign and beloved by the people."

Bowerbank meant, among other things, that Jordon had finally perceived that the white planters and merchants had agreed to give up the Constitution not only because they feared the peasants, but because they wanted to block the rising power of the educated coloured folk. Jordon's own class was the one that suffered the heaviest losses in prestige and places under Crown Colony government in its first phase. The cause on which he had built his career was wrecked while he was serving Eyre as Island Secretary, and Morant Bay was the excuse utilized.

Edward Jordon married, but I have not been able to come upon the record. He had no issue. Even his great-grandniece, Miss Elma Jordon, a descendant of his brother Robert Jordon, is not able to give the maiden name of the eminent Jamaican's wife; it probably was Touzalin, according to Mr. Sam Burke of Kingston.



George William Gordon

S every Jamaican knows, it was a common practice among the planters in slavery times to take a black or coloured bondswoman as a concubine, and in some cases more than one. Scrupulous masters broke off irregular relationships when they married. Others, and these probably were in the majority, did not hesitate to maintain them. The treatment accorded the concubine and her offspring rested absolutely with the man. If he wished he could hold them in slavery. Generally they were freed and given economic security of a sort. The better type of father had his mixed-blood children educated and made an effort to find jobs for the boys.

Joseph Gordon, a Scotsman who came to Jamaica very early in the Nineteenth Century and acquired large holdings, was one of those with a low sense of human responsibility. While living at Cherry Garden estate in the St. Andrew hills near to Kingston, he chose a slave girl of dark complexion who bore him several children. A son, born a little before 1820, was named George William. All the others seem to have been girls. Joseph Gordon kept them in a small separate establishment. After he married he did not allow any of them to enter the great house. They stayed nominally in servitude until they were freed by the general Emancipation Act in

the next decade. However, he recognised that George William was a promising lad, gave him school books so that he could teach himself to read, write and figure, and allowed him to go at the age of ten to James Daly of Black River, who had stood as godfather for him.

George William Gordon owed the rounding out of his education in part to Daly, in part to the eagerness with which he read books and applied the facts picked up. Daly put him to work in his business in 1831, and soon he was a valued assistant. The boy was quick-witted, handsome, popular: qualities that increased with the passing years. Every one who knew him as a young man praised him. He had natural gifts as an orator, and he enjoyed using them not only in politics but in religious controversy. There was something erratic from the beginning about his preoccupation with sects and dogmas. He had been brought up in the Anglican Church and he never completely broke with it. Yet he joined the Presbyterians, was disturbed by some of their practices and had himself baptised with total immersion by the Rev. J. M. Philipppo at Spanish Town. Nevertheless, he would not adhere to the regular Baptists, but talked early of forming a Church of his own.

He observed his father's activities without malice, though with a frank ambition to outdo him. The elder Gordon had long been an attorney for absentee landlords, as well as a property owner in several parishes. He had been elected to the House of Assembly and was Custos of St. Andrew. During the period of Negro apprenticeship, between 1834 and 1838, the Hon. Joseph Gordon had thirty properties and from seven to eight thousand slaves under his care. W. J. Gardner, the historian,

quotes him as having said that "on the whole the apprentice system worked well, better than he had expected; though, owing to the shortening of the hours of labour, only three-fourths of the work formerly completed could be done." It was not suspected at the time, but Joseph Gordon was a bad manager and had greatly overreached himself in speculative ventures.

I find it difficult to put my finger on the exact circumstances of George William Gordon's sensational launching of a career. He left Black River and opened a store of his own in Kingston, in 1836, when he could not have been twenty years of age. James Daly wrote him that year from London to wish him well. The Hon. Richard Hill said he had first become acquainted with Gordon in 1836, who "impressed me then, though young-looking, with the air of a man of ready business habits." A. Lyon, a common councillor of Kingston, declared in 1866 that he had "known Gordon from his [Gordon's] childhood, thirty-eight years ago." Also in 1866, the Rev. Duncan Fletcher, author of a hasty life of Gordon, asserted vaguely that "a lady lent him £1,000 to start in business," that he had met the interest on the loan and repaid her in full. The loan must have been for the purpose of expanding rather than starting the venture of the gifted youth. Gordon met with immediate success, for we find him in 1842 commissioning Mrs. Shannon, his future mother-in-law, to take his twin sisters to England and France, to be educated at his expense. Later he sent an elder sister to join them.

The most positive evidence is that offered by William Lee, a Kingston merchant, who declared in a communication to the press dated September 11, 1893: "About the

middle of the year 1843, Gordon asked me and a friend to come over to his store to celebrate the seventh anniversary since he began business, and drink a glass of champagne. He then said he was worth £10,000, and that he began business with nothing but his own energy and business habits as his stock in trade."

In October, 1846, Gordon married Lucy Shannon, a white woman whose father had been an Irish editor and whose mother ran one of the best Kingston private schools. The bridegroom is described as being taller than the average and muscular, of a light brown complexion with Caucasian features, notably a strong nose and thin lips. He wore the fashionable side-whiskers of the period. Gordon's habits were abstemious, but that did not detract from his gay and sociable manner. He was extremely charitable, to the point of often calling in a hungry passer-by and giving away the lunch he had had sent to the store. His treatment of his father attained a high level of generosity.

The elder Gordon had taken no notice whatever of George after the latter's removal as a boy to Black River. His doors, of course, had stayed closed to him since his arrival in Kingston. But when it became clear that George would soon be a rich man, he called on him at the store and offered his hand. There was a reason. Joseph Gordon's business affairs were going from bad to worse. He had lost some of his estates and others were in danger of foreclosure. George quietly took charge of the financial tangle, saving much of the wreckage. In particular, he redeemed Cherry Garden and gave it back to his father as a home. Even then he was not received there, had not expected to be. A few years later he paid

the travelling expenses of the legitimate family to England, where they had decided to live, and took over Cherry Garden himself.

Ironically, when Joseph Gordon made a trip back to Jamaica to wind up the last of his interests, he stayed with George both at Cherry Garden and at a property in St. Mary. They had a quarrel over the last-mentioned estate, but this was patched up as a result of the son's magnanimity. They parted on good terms, forever.

George showed no rancour toward his father in discussing him with friends. He went out of his way to extol his good qualities and spoke respectfully of the lady he had married, a former Mrs. Perkins of Kingston. There was a profoundly sentimental and forgiving strain in George William Gordon's character.

Walking on one occasion with the Rev. D. King through the back lands of Cherry Garden, he stopped suddenly, pointed at a mound among some trees and said emotionally: "My mother is buried there, Mr. King. She was a Negro and a slave, but she was a kind mother to me and I loved her dearly."

The public life of this unique man began to take positive form around 1850. He entered politics as a member of the Town Party, but with the difference that Gordon was most passionately the advocate of the poverty-stricken Negro peasants, whereas Jordon and others of the party spoke primarily for the coloured middle-class. It is generally overlooked that Gordon was first elected to the Assembly in the 1850s. Economic conditions were not so bad then as they became later, and the conservative majority regarded his views indulgently. William Lee writes that "Gordon was a keen debater and

a ready speaker in the House of Assembly, and it was amusing to hear him in his discursive manner survey the world from China to Peru when he was put up by his party to speak against time, which he would do for many hours at a stretch."

He was appointed a justice of the peace, at intervals, in seven parishes. He won election to the Kingston Common Council, and more than once deputized for Edward Jordon during the early years of the latter's long mayoralty.

Meanwhile he made rapid progress in business, buying or leasing almost as many properties as his father had once controlled, and with more acumen though his judgment in this respect was by no means perfect. His most important holdings were in St. Thomas in the East, including Rhine estate. He was motivated in part by a desire to help the peasants by cutting up idle land and selling freeholds cheaply, at a time when many whites refused to sell to the Negroes. His business acts were scrupulously fair and often philanthropic. He was one of the chief founders of the Jamaica Mutual Life Assurance Society. The mortality claims were very heavy in 1850 and 1851, owing to an epidemic of cholera. Some of the directors proposed to evade the responsibility by winding up the concern. Gordon would have none of it, and he forced the payment of all claims by threatening his fellow-directors with an injunction in Chancery. He became the proprietor of the revived *WATCHMAN* newspaper in 1858 or 1859.

Along with politics and business Gordon's third dominating interest was religion. He carried out his plans for starting an independent Baptist organisation,

built a tabernacle in Kingston and often preached at it, helped his followers to open a few chapels in the country, selected deacons and ordained them by the laying on of hands. Paul Bogle of Stony Gut, St. Thomas, was created a deacon by him. Yet Gordon never called himself a minister, or used the title of "Reverend". He attended haphazard the churches of all denominations, except the Roman Catholic.

He delighted in revivalistic methods. One Sunday morning he awoke in a lodging house in Bath, St. Thomas, where he had stayed overnight on his way to one of his properties. There was no indication of a service in any church or chapel. So Gordon stepped into the street and began to yell, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" at the top of his voice. Of course, this attracted a crowd. When he was asked where the fire was, he beat his chest and shouted: "The fire is within me. I burn to worship the Lord. Let us hold a prayer meeting here and now." He then led the people exuberantly in prayer, and gave them a sermon to boot.

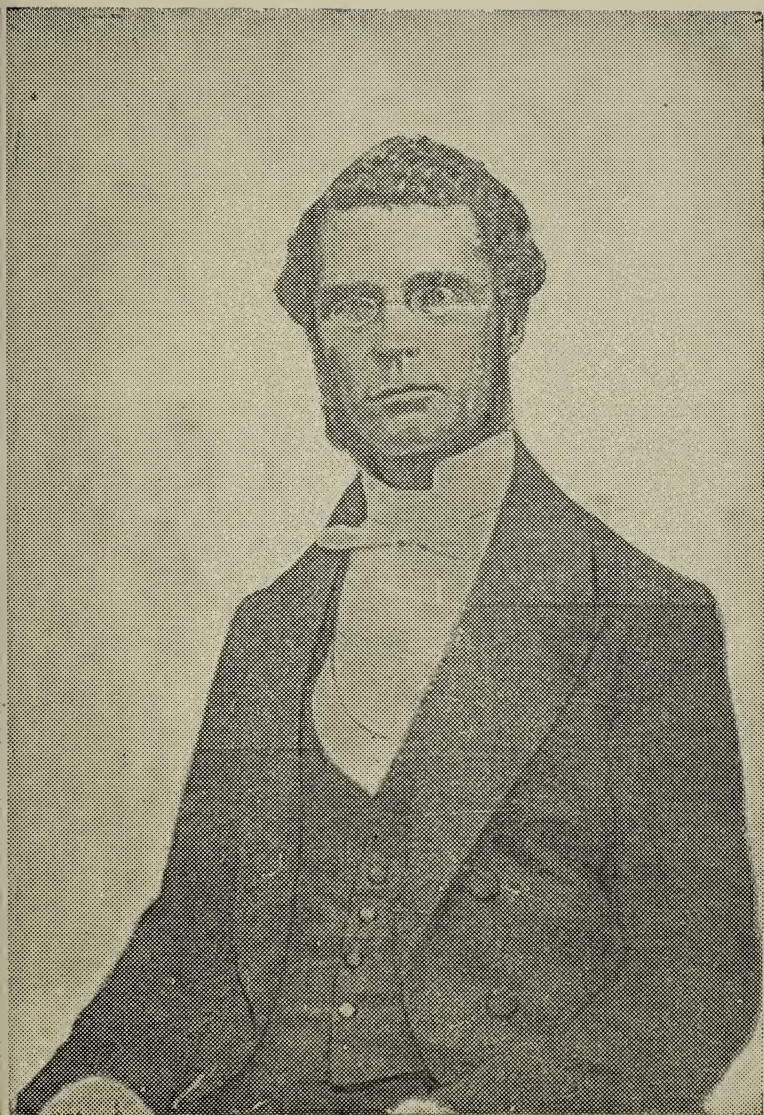
The Baptist Missionary Society conducted a great religious revival in Jamaica, in 1859. Among the visiting preachers was Edward Bean Underhill, whose writings were to play a large part in the drama that was about to unfold. Gordon supported the movement with avidity, touring the Island in the company of the exhorters. Duncan Fletcher, one of the missionaries, wrote later in his life of the Jamaican:

"In prayer his whole soul seemed rapt, and away from his body and all sublunary objects, and immediately pleading with God before the throne, as a child with his father. He was a princely wrestler in prayer. Not

infrequently have I listened to him, like his Lord when on earth, offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, until I and all who knelt beside him felt utterly unable to resist the subduing and melting unction which accompanied those devotional ecstasies. . . . Mr. Gordon was, in a word, a MISSIONARY MODEL."

By any standard of measurement George William Gordon was a singular character to develop, more or less suddenly, into a nationalist leader. Yet that was his role after the spring of 1862, when Edward John Eyre arrived as Lieutenant Governor, supposedly to serve only during the leave of absence that had been granted to Governor Sir Charles Darling. Popular discontent had been hardening for some time. Local political feuds had become savage and mischievous. These troubles, however, could have been smoothed over by an able, well-meaning governor. Jamaica had the misfortune of getting in Eyre the most calamitous administrator in her entire history. And it would be impossible to imagine two more antipathetic personalities than those of Eyre and Gordon. They were bound to clash.

The previous career of the Lieutenant Governor, mind you, did not indicate that he would probably make a mess of Jamaican affairs. He had been a distinguished explorer in Australia, where several places, including a lake and an important peninsula, are called after him. He had been appointed protector of the natives of South Australia, and afterwards protector of the East Indian immigrants in Trinidad, giving satisfaction in both posts. He had functioned effectively as a high official in the Leeward Islands. Why should greater responsibility go to the head of such a man?



HON. GEORGE WILLIAM GORDON

It will be well at this point to quote Sydney (Baron) Olivier, who also was Governor of Jamaica and a very good one. Olivier did careful research on the period and was so indignant at the malice and the blundering of his predecessor that he wrote a destructive analysis in a book entitled *THE MYTH OF GOVERNOR EYRE*. He states:

"Eyre, as the language of his despatches at times reveals, shared, as an axiomatic standard of judgment, the colour-prejudice of the less intelligent whites of that [the ruling] class. Gordon was a Baptist; Eyre, a devout Anglican, shared as an equally axiomatic standard of judgment, the prejudice against and contempt for Dissenters which all good Churchmen of his period religiously entertained, the ignorant and intense uncharity of which can hardly today be appreciated by those who were not bred in the Anglicanism of that time and imbued with its ideas about the nonconformist communities."

Of George William Gordon, Olivier writes:

"Gordon was unquestionably an ill-balanced, excitable, and perhaps it may be said irresponsibly reckless man. He invested extravagantly in real estate, and his creditors, at his death, lost very heavily on their mortgages. In this respect, however, he followed the lead of his white father. . . . He lost heavily in dealings in coffee, which he had bought on advances from London merchants."

There was much else to be said against Eyre, and Olivier said it. Also about Gordon, who in the paragraph cited above received his most severe treatment from this twentieth-century Governor of Jamaica (seemingly in the spirit of leaning backwards to be fair) and was otherwise defended by Olivier. Let us glance at some of the prin-

cipal acts of the two opponents between 1862 and 1865, and hear a few contemporary opinions of them.

For a mere lieutenant governor, Eyre rushed ahead with the enforcement of personal policies in a truly startling manner. He supported the granting of an exclusive license to an illegal company organised by the Island Engineer to build and operate a tramway line down the middle of the main road from Spanish Town to Porus. The scheme was dishonest financially, and it would practically have closed the road to small producers who had no other way of bringing their goods to market. It became a scandal, but Eyre fought to the last ditch for the tramway. No one accuses him of having benefited himself in a money way. He was just stubborn and stupid about it. Finally the enraged cultivators tore up the tram rails, and the whole scheme collapsed.

He would do nothing to relieve unemployment or reduce unfair taxation that bore heavily on the peasantry. Instead he jammed through a bill to provide flogging as a penalty for praedial larceny, and another to establish the treadmill for certain offenders. He connived at the rascality of the lay magistrates and their clerks who depended on fees for their pay. Yet he browbeat the higher judiciary, ejecting in particular an official assignee of the Supreme Court to the House of Assembly who had refused to vote as the Governor required. In this connection, Eyre said that he neither knew nor cared for Island law, but that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was his law. His flouting of the Jamaica Constitution raised enemies for him in both political parties. He upheld the Church of England, right or wrong, in every controversy affecting it.

Gordon had, of course, promptly gone into opposition, though at first respectfully enough. He had dropped out of the Assembly. Early in 1862 he attempted to return from St. Thomas in a bye-election, but was defeated. He was, however, a member of the St. Thomas Vestry, as the parochial board was then called. With two other justices of the peace, he was inspecting the prison at Morant Bay when he discovered a man in a dying condition in a latrine. He learned that the man had applied for alms to the rector, the Rev. S. H. Cooke, who had sent him for care to the prison of all places. Gordon protested this irregularity to the Governor and asked for an enquiry. Eyre ordered the board in charge of the prison to investigate, was told that the facts as stated were correct, but chose to regard the complaint as an insult to the rector. Eyre then summarily removed Gordon from his posts as vestryman and justice of the peace. The matter was appealed to the Colonial Office, with the result that Eyre was lightly censured, but his act allowed to stand.

The House of Assembly was dissolved at the beginning of 1863. Gordon renewed his candidacy in St. Thomas and was elected. A few months later, he won the churchwarden's seat in the Vestry of the same parish, the laws then providing that the Established Church should have a member, apart from its clergyman. Eyre had appointed one of his cronies, the Prussian-born Baron Maximilian Augustus von Ketelhodt, Custos of St. Thomas as a man he could trust to deal with such problems as Gordon, it would appear. Von Ketelhodt declined to allow Gordon to take his seat in the Vestry, on the theory that he was now a Baptist and disqualified to speak for the Church of England, and when Gordon insisted on remaining he had him forcibly taken from the room. Aspects

of this controversy were still before the courts two years afterwards, with the appeal costs of the baron and the rector paid for out of parish funds.

Gordon in 1863 began to fire heavy broadsides in the Assembly. He spoke to his fellow-legislators, according to one authority, "with amazing seriousness," in defence of the rights of the poorer class. Referring to Eyre's support of the Flogging Bill and the Treadmill Bill, Gordon said:

"I have never seen an animal more voracious for cruelty and power than the present Governor of Jamaica. If we are to be governed by such a Governor much longer, the people will have to fly to arms and become self-governing."

In a general discussion of Eyre's conduct at about the same time, Gordon declared:

"*Per se*, as the Honourable Member for St. Catherine said, the people would be quite right to break out into open rebellion. If an illegality is permitted in the Governor, an illegality may be permitted on the part of the people."

The above were his two most violent utterances. Yet it was pointed out at the time that such language was fairly common in parliaments, the House of Commons not excepted, in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. The leaders of the English Chartists had said as much, and from them it had been regarded as partisan rhetoric. Gordon never went so far as Edward Jordon had gone in his circular threatening to "shout war and wage it, until the streets of Kingston should run blood." Gordon avoided the word "rebellion" outside the privileged walls of the House of Assembly. On the contrary, he urged the

people only to organise and petition peacefully for redress of wrongs. He is not believed to have printed inflammatory material in his *WATCHMAN*, but as I have been unable to discover a file of the paper I cannot prove the point.

In May, 1864, the majority of persons in Jamaica were vastly astonished to learn that Edward John Eyre had become full Governor. Darling's ambiguous leave of absence had been ended by a promotion to Australia. Eyre had actually gone to Port Royal to receive the mail as quickly as possible, expecting despatches that would transfer him. Instead he had found his own commission for Jamaica and had returned, gloating, to Spanish Town. His attitude grew perceptibly more tyrannical.

The year 1865 began with gloomy social portents. Long droughts had caused intense suffering. Stimulated by a letter addressed to the Colonial Office by the missionary Dr. E. B. Underhill, dealing with conditions in Jamaica, which had been made public abroad, meetings of protest were held all over the island. These came to be known as "Underhill meetings," and they attracted orators of many shades of opinion. They naturally were approved and helped by Gordon. But he took steps of his own. On May 3 he presided over a huge meeting at his Kingston tabernacle, and resolutions were passed calling upon "all the descendants of Africa, in every parish throughout the Island, to form themselves into Societies, and hold public meetings, and co-operate, for the purpose of setting forth their grievances."

Gordon himself drew up what he called a placard, for use in the parish of St. Ann. It was headed as follows:

“People of St. Ann’s,
Poor People of St. Ann’s,
Starving People of St. Ann’s,
Naked People of St. Ann’s.”

The outcome was a number of orderly meetings and a petition addressed to Queen Victoria, asking for relief measures. Eyre sent the petition to England, and in return got a document from the Colonial Secretary stating that the Queen had been informed and that she wished to commend hard work and industry to the labouring classes of Jamaica. They must not expect schemes of Government aid to improve their condition. Her Majesty would regard with interest and satisfaction their advancement through their own merits and effort.

This is what is known in Jamaica history as the “Queen’s Letter.” Eyre had fifty thousand copies of it printed, with a preface by himself, for Island-wide distribution and ordered it posted as of date July 5. He said he believed it would put an end to the Underhill meetings. In St. Thomas, Baron von Ketelhodt, who had actually agreed to a public discussion of Dr. Underhill’s letter, read the Queen’s “letter” to his Vestry and cancelled the Underhill meeting. But Gordon went ahead with plans for a gathering in Morant Bay on July 29. He also spoke in Vere and other parishes. One of his placards asserted that the Queen was “too noble-hearted to say anything unkind even to her most humble subjects;” it was to be feared that her ministers had been “deceived and misled, and the consequence is a serious grievance to our people, but we advise them to be prudent, yet firm in their remonstrances, and we have no doubt that truth will ultimately prevail.” This mild language enraged Eyre

beyond measure. He declared that the placard was of seditious intent.

There certainly was general unrest, particularly in St. Thomas, where the agitation centered about the figure of Paul Bogle of Stony Gut, he whom Gordon had made a deacon of his independent Baptist sect. Bogle was a firm political adherent of Gordon and had canvassed votes for him in various election campaigns, but no documentary evidence makes the Member of Assembly responsible for the black man's local organisation. The most that can be adduced is a hymnbook inscribed to Bogle, "with the Christian regards of G. W. Gordon." Olivier writes:

"Paul Bogle was a man of energetic natural ability and dominant personality, having the imperious character of an African chief combined with the conviction that he was an instrument of the power and justice of God; ignorant and of most limited education, but successful and well-off among his class of small settlers. . . . He had acquired much local influence and authority, and had been able to raise the money for building a large chapel."

His chief lieutenants were his brother Moses Bogle, a baker, and James Maclaren of Fonthill, also a preacher, who styled himself Paul Bogle's secretary. According to Olivier, the members of the group had gone so far as to establish a system of courts among themselves to deal with their own disputes, the judgments of which they obeyed. They had appointed justices and constables, issued summonses and levied fines.

It would be ridiculous to suppose that Gordon did not know the lengths to which Bogle had gone. We may even assume that he approved of his activities, saw him

as a force that would be valuable in making demonstrations against the authorities, and may have encouraged him as one who would be able to help bring about a wider degree of self-government for Jamaica. Gordon was a conscious nationalist in 1865. But there is no reason whatsoever to think that he incited Bogle to resort to bloodshed. He believed that his ends could be won without violence, as may be seen from the following (not intended for publication) which he wrote to his overseer Henry Lawrence on Rhine estate:

“This man, Mr. Eyre, is an arrant liar and he supports all his emissaries. We shall have to go before Parliament with a strong petition and attack the whole Colonial system.”

Again, he wrote to Lawrence: “Poor people! Their plan is to pray to God for deliverance! You may laugh at this and call it cant; but I assure you it is the most effectual plan. If you knew the ways in which God can, and often does, destroy the evil-doer, you would agree.”

And what were other persons, more conservative persons, saying about Eyre at this time? The MORNING JOURNAL, which Olivier erred in calling a mouthpiece of the “Planters’ Party,” meaning the Country Party, but which was then more moderate even than Jordon and Osborn, referred on September 13 to acts of Governor Eyre, “not a few of which have been outrageous enough to drive any less forbearing people than the colonists of Jamaica into open rebellion.” The paper went on to discuss a mooted petition for his recall and added: “Mr. Eyre has lost his self-command, if he ever had self-command, and is in the position of the pilot who is letting the vessel drift among the rocks or wheresoever the chap-

ter of accidents may toss it."

On September 18, the paper returned to the attack: "His Excellency is one of those commonly called 'stubborn men'. Now, as a rule, stubborn men are not able men; and their doggedness is evidence more of lack of ability than judgment, backed by firmness, for which it is often mistaken." It spoke of his having been influenced by selfish men: "There was one of the lot, in particular, who was certain to involve him in difficulties. That man is Dr. Bowerbank."

The reader must be given some notion of the character of Bowerbank, who was about to play an outstanding part in events. Dr. Lewis Quier Bowerbank, a physician and politician, had been a member of the House of Assembly, and was then Custos of Kingston. He was in charge of the Kingston Public Hospital, where there had been recent scandals relating to the deaths of patients from improper medical treatment. Yet Bowerbank proclaimed himself a philanthropist and was so regarded by his friends. Others termed him in print a designing and malicious man who played upon the prejudices of Eyre.

As late as October 5, the MORNING JOURNAL remarked that the editor of the ultra-conservative GUARDIAN had praised Bowerbank as "one of the most distinguished citizens" of Kingston, and added: "Substitute *notorious* and we will agree with him."

During the early part of October Gordon did not visit St. Thomas. He was intermittently ill in Kingston with bronchitis and dysentery. Knowing that Paul Bogle and James Maclaren had tramped the forty-five miles from Stony Gut to Spanish Town in August to present complaints to the Governor and had been denied an

audience, Gordon had advocated a deputation to England. But it is most uncertain whether he knew that Bogle held secret meetings in the hills through September and began the rough drilling of bands of men.

On October 7 Bogle was in Morant Bay with a fairly large number of followers who marched in with fife and drum. It was a court day. A man having been fined in an assault case, a member of the crowd shouted to the defendant that he should pay the fine but not the costs. The interrupter was ordered arrested. Bogle and others took a hand, scuffled with the police, rescued the prisoner and went off with him. Three days later, on the 10th, a corporal of police, four constables and three rural guards arrived at Stony Gut to arrest Bogle. They were overpowered and forced to swear loyalty to the peasants' movement. On being released, they went back to Morant Bay and reported to the Custos. Von Ketelhodt sent off a messenger to the Governor to ask for immediate military aid, but decided to hold the scheduled meeting of the Vestry the next day. He called out the volunteers, or militia, to protect the courthouse.

I shall give no more than a brief summary of what happened on October 11, the fatal day. Jamaicans are familiar enough with the rebellion as a whole, and my available space must be reserved for describing Gordon's fate. Bogle started early for Morant Bay with some two hundred men, while about one hundred others converged from adjoining districts. On the way down Bogle told a shopkeeper that he was not in revolt against the Queen; he and his people had resisted unjust arrest and would continue to do so, but he would "apply for bail." A police station was rushed, nevertheless, and muskets and

bayonets seized. The cry, "Colour for colour" was heard among the marchers. Many shouted that, if they met with resistance, they would kill all the whites and people of mixed blood who supported the whites, so that the Negroes might own Jamaica. This was the language of the slave revolution in Haiti. I am convinced that Paul Bogle saw himself that day as a Toussaint l'Ouverture at the best, as a Dessalines at the worst.

When the marchers reached the courthouse they found twenty-two armed volunteers drawn up outside. An altercation started. The Custos came out on the upper landing of the steps and cried, "Peace, peace!" He was answered by yells of "War". After a delay, he reappeared and read the Riot Act. Some one in the street threw a stone that injured an officer. The order to fire was given, and as the great crowd surged forward the volunteers were either killed or driven into the building. A siege of the courthouse followed. A structure behind it was set afire, and as the flames spread to the main building all the occupants were forced into the open. Fifteen, including Von Ketelhodt, were slain and about thirty wounded. Afterwards three white men were killed on plantations.

Bogle controlled Morant Bay. He left a garrison there, but returned with the rest of his men to Stony Gut where he held a prayer meeting that night to give thanks "that God had succeeded him in his work." Later he issued a proclamation signed by himself, Maclaren and two others, which ran in part: "Blow your shells — roll your drums — house to house — take out every man — march them down with their arms. War is at my black skin — war is at hand."

The company of soldiers that Von Ketelhodt had asked for arrived at the Bay the next morning, and the followers of Bogle fled. Kingston and Spanish Town did not learn the news until the morning of the 12th. Eyre took immediate steps. He proclaimed martial law for the parishes of St. Thomas, Portland and St. Andrew, but not for Kingston where it would have disrupted business. He ordered the commander-in-chief of the forces, General O'Connor, to keep troops pouring into the disturbed parish, promoted Colonel A. A. Nelson of the West India Regiment and a retired Anglo-Indian officer named Forbes-Jackson to be brigadier generals, appointed Police Inspector G. Duberry Ramsay provost marshal, and summoned the St. Thomas and Portland Maroons to take up arms in aid of the Government.

To Edward Jordon, the Island Secretary, Eyre said: "All this has come of Mr. Gordon's agitation." He did not at the moment speak of having Gordon arrested, though he had the *WATCHMAN* newspaper, owned by the suspect, raided and suppressed. Then the Governor chartered the *Caravelle*, a French ship lying in the harbour, and rushed off to Morant Bay, in the wake of the war vessels *Wolverene* and *Onyx* already despatched by him.

Eyre personally presided over the execution of a convicted Negro, gave Ramsay and the military officers a free hand in stamping out resistance and punishing the guilty. After that he went cruising around the eastern end of the Island as far as Port Antonio in search of action.

While the Governor was absent, Dr. Bowerbank behaved in what many described as a panic-stricken and

hysterical manner. He had Gordon's shop and offices searched, found an old map of Kingston with marks at certain street corners, and hastened to show the map to General O'Connor as a revolutionary document. Riots in Kingston were imminent, Bowerbank said; the city would be put to the torch and all the whites massacred. The marks on the map, in his opinion, indicated where the rebels were to gather and set fires. O'Connor treated him very coolly and labelled his fears as visionary.

As soon as Eyre returned from Morant Bay, in the early morning of the 17th, Bowerbank got hold of him and used language which he subsequently repeated in a letter to the *LONDON TIMES*. "The urgency of the case and the necessity of striking a prompt and decisive blow to crush the rebellion and save the Island . . ." the Custos insisted, "required that Mr. Gordon should be dealt with summarily."

The same conclusion had been reached by the Governor, but Bowerbank egged him on to take immediate action. Bowerbank, as chief of the Kingston magistracy, called a meeting of his colleagues that morning. Eyre made a speech to them, in which he said that the rebellion was well under control. All the same, he and Bowerbank went straight from the meeting to the peace office (police), where the Governor ordered a warrant issued for the arrest of Gordon.

A little before noon Gordon, who had been staying with his wife for some days in the house of a cousin, was visited by his physician, Dr. Alexander Fiddes, and told about the warrant. Gordon promptly walked with Fiddes to Headquarters House on Duke Street, which is now the legislative chamber but was at that time per-

manently used by the military, hence its name. Seeking out General O'Connor, Gordon announced that he had come to give himself up. O'Connor refused politely to take charge of him, saying in effect that he was a soldier, not a policeman. As they were talking, Eyre and Bowerbank arrived in the anteroom. Told that Gordon was on the premises, Eyre exclaimed: "That is very lucky; we have been looking for him." He and his companion strode into O'Connor's office. Without saying a word they took hold of Gordon, one by the right arm and one by the left, and marched him out to Bowerbank's carriage.

The prisoner asked quietly to be allowed to say goodbye to his wife. This was conceded and a brief stop was made for the purpose. Then the party drove down to the waterfront and took Gordon aboard the *Wolverene*. A member of the Executive Committee, Mr. Westmorland, learned what had happened and came to the ship in time to advise Eyre to have Gordon tried by a civil commission. But Eyre had resolved on the illegal course of removing him from Kingston, which was not under martial law, to St. Thomas, where it was in force and where a sure conviction could be had.

Eyre again cruised to Port Antonio and did not put in at Morant Bay until the 20th, when he turned Gordon over to Provost Marshal Ramsay with instructions to try him for "high treason and sedition, and having complicity with certain parties in the insurrection." The prisoner was brutally treated, his coat and waistcoat being torn off him by soldiers or bystanders, and his spectacles snatched, before he was locked up.

The reprisals had been going on in St. Thomas with the greatest ferocity, though the rebels had put up

no real defence. Bogle had not ventured to stand even for a skirmish, but was roving through the mountains with a diminishing band. To give the figures that appear to be most accurate, 439 Negroes were executed, some of them after drum-head court martials, but many without a hearing; 600, including women, had been flogged severely and others informally beaten; and 1,005 dwellings had been burned. The Maroons had joined gleefully in the operations and were guilty of atrocities and looting, though in this they cannot be said to have surpassed the regular soldiers and the sailors landed from the ships.

The salient feature was the fantastic sadism developed by Ramsay. He bullied and tortured men held for trial, and he improvised punishments, often swinging cat and supplejack with his own hands. Having ordered a labourer to be flogged, he interrupted the penalty because the victim had turned his head toward him with a grimace. "Take that man out and hang him," he screamed, and the thing was done. After he got hold of Gordon, Ramsay went among his lesser prisoners shouting: "Who can give evidence against G. W. Gordon? He will save his life and be rewarded." The Provost Marshal found two, a youth and a boy, who seized the chance offered them.

Gordon's court martial was held on Saturday, October 21, with Lieutenant Brand, commander of the *Onyx* presiding. The accused had difficulty in getting permission to take notes. Other requests by him and his objections to flimsy evidence were brushed aside. The hearing was hurried through. The court deliberated in private, found Gordon guilty and sentenced him to be hanged at time and place to be directed by Brigadier General Nelson. The General concurred and the verdict was forwarded to

Eyre, who also concurred. Yet Nelson delayed the execution for two days and left Gordon in ignorance of his fate until one hour before he was to die, on Monday morning.

Gordon did not falter. He asked for pen and paper and wrote a touching letter to his wife, in which he said: "I did not expect that, not being a rebel, I should have been tried and disposed of in this way. I thought His Excellency the Governor would have allowed me a fair trial, if any charge of sedition or inflammatory language were attributable to me; but I have no power of control. May the Lord be merciful to him."

They took George William Gordon out and banged him with eighteen others on a boom that had been set up in front of the courthouse. The bodies were left swinging until the next morning and then tossed together into a trench at the back of the building. Some accounts say that Gordon was buried under a big cotton tree near the town, but this seems improbable.

Paul Bogle was captured coming out of a cane piece behind Stony Gut, the day after Gordon's execution. He behaved phlegmatically, talking coolly with his guards on the road to Morant Bay. Asked whether Gordon had instigated his rising, he said No. Bogle was given a prompt court martial and received the death penalty, as in his case was inevitable and just. With interesting subtlety he was hanged at the yardarm of the *Wolverene*, a more honourable form of execution than Gordon's. In other words, Bogle was treated as an African chief rather than a renegade.

The next act in the drama was the suicide of the House of Assembly under the urging of Eyre. It voted itself out of existence, along with Jamaica's two-hundred-

year-old Constitution, and the Queen asked to substitute any form of government that she saw fit. There resulted a Crown Colony system that was to last for almost eighty years. Eyre played upon the fears of selfish men by raising the bogey of further uprisings by the Negroes and the need of a strong administration backed by men-of-war and bayonets. But he did not get his way easily. There was a consistent minority varying from ten to thirteen members, led by Samuel Constantine Burke, that voted to the end against the clauses of the self-immolation bill. On one occasion Burke cried that the House had lost its senses, and that the day would come when the members would deplore their folly.


The constitutional change had just been effected when there arrived a Royal Commission of enquiry, appointed in response to liberal sentiment in England that had demanded the full truth about the Morant Bay Rebellion. The commission suspended Eyre, and after sitting for several weeks it filed a report so damaging to him that the Crown decided not to reinstate him. Sir John Peter Grant became Governor.

Of the innumerable testimonials in Gordon's favour which were made public at this time, I shall quote just one. It was offered by his physician, Dr. Fiddes, who had known him for twenty years. "Although I always regarded him as rather eccentric in his views and notions of the people's rights, and somewhat peculiar in his religious observances," Fiddes said, "I had, nevertheless, great respect for the power of his intellect and the innate force of his character. . . . That he ever counselled the people to the commission of acts of violence and murder, I do not believe."

George William Gordon was fundamentally a good man, and he should be remembered as a martyr to his conception of patriotism.



Enos Nuttall

N December, 1862, a lay missionary under twenty-one years of age landed in Kingston and took up his work as one of three representatives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the city. This young man was Enos Nuttall, destined to become a most powerful figure as Anglican Bishop of Jamaica and then Archbishop of the West Indies. Contrary to what is often written about him, Nuttall was never ordained a Wesleyan minister. Both he and his Yorkshire father were professed members of the Church of England, but maintained close relations with the Wesleys, the sect into which the elder Nuttall had been born.

Enos had attracted local attention as a boy lay preacher and had set his mind on becoming a missionary. Conditions among the then savage Fiji Islanders aroused his interest. He wrote to the Rev. George Osborn, Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, offering himself for this special field and was tentatively accepted for it. Dr. Osborn, however, arranged for him to take a course of private tuition, and when it was ended asked him to go to Jamaica instead of Fiji. Enos Nuttall regarded it as his duty to agree without debate. He arrived in the crucial year when Edward John Eyre became Lieutenant Governor and George William Gordon began his uncompromising opposition to that gentleman's policies.

Nuttall took no part in the controversies that raged between 1862 and the end of 1865. He did not even comment on the unsupported resolution moved by Gordon in the House of Assembly, well ahead of Morant Bay, that the Anglican Church should be disestablished. So it is curious to find his name signed to an "Address from Dissenting Ministers and Missionaries" to Governor Eyre, dated January 24, 1866. Among the ten other signers were John Radcliffe, of the Church of Scotland; and William James Gardner, of the London Missionary Society, also known as a historian. The address declared "most heartfelt sympathy with yourself in the very difficult and trying circumstances in which you were placed . . ." and "our most solemn conviction that to your Excellency's prompt, energetic and decisive measures we owe it that the scenes of Morant Bay were not enacted throughout the Island."

Why did Nuttall associate himself with this document at the moment when the British Government had shown its mistrust of Eyre's zeal by sending a Royal Commission of enquiry? His co-signers were probably still shaking with fear, and more at what Bogle had actually done than at the supposed plotting of Gordon. But Nuttall did not know the meaning of the word panic. His name could have been on that list solely as a result of his innate political conservatism and belief in the Anglican Church, of which Eyre was the supreme champion in Jamaica. Nuttall had found with distaste that — to use his own words — "allegiance to the existing Wesleyan organization meant separation from, and in a sense antagonism to, the Church of England." He had already offered himself as a candidate for the Anglican ministry.

During that same month of January, 1866, he formally moved over.

He was admitted to the office of deacon by Bishop Reginald Courtenay at Spanish Town, on February 18. Less than six weeks later he was ordained a priest, made Island Curate and appointed to St. George's, Kingston, a cure he held nominally till the day of his death.

Crown Colony rule was inaugurated. Sir John Peter Grant assumed the governorship, and he is credited with having made the remark that he would so change the condition of Jamaica that if the dead could rise from their graves they would not recognise the Island. It quickly became known that part of his programme for reform and retrenchment was the disestablishment of the Church. To understand the need for a change we must take a backward glance at history.

The expedition under Penn and Venables brought clerics with it, and in the reign of Charles II "the Protestant religion, according to the Church of England" was enjoined upon the colony. But Jamaica was to be part of the episcopal see of London, an unworkable plan in view of distance and slow communications. The House of Assembly gave the Church generous financial support. It also passed acts limiting the power of the Bishop of London over the Island clergy. The latter, to a considerable extent, looked upon themselves as private chaplains to the planter and merchant class that controlled the Assembly. Other religious sects were tolerated, but not helped.

It has never been denied that throughout the Eighteenth Century the state of the Church in Jamaica was discreditable. The historian Edward Long writes:

"There have seldom been wanting some who were equally respectable for their learning, piety and exemplary good behaviour: others have been detestable for their addiction to lewdness, drinking, gambling and iniquity; having no control but their own sense of the dignity of their function, and the censures of the Governor." Again: "Some labourers of the Lord's vineyard have at times been sent, who were much better qualified to be retailers of salt-fish or boatswains to privateers than ministers of religion."

Another contemporary observer speaks of the majority of the clergy as being "the most finished of all debauchees." Drinking bouts with planter friends often took precedence over the holding of services, and travelers noted with astonishment that many of the churches were rarely opened. Advancement was by favouritism, for in practice the Governor assigned most of the livings. The most celebrated case was that of John Wolcot, otherwise known to fame as a wit and poet under the nom-de-plume of Peter Pindar.

Wolcot, who had studied medicine, accompanied his kinsman Sir William Trelawny when the latter came as Governor in 1767. His social accomplishments caused him to be popular with the right people, and when he talked of being forced to leave because he was short of cash all of them, including Trelawny, were most regretful. The Governor then calmly suggested that Wolcot get himself ordained so that he could appoint him rector of St. Ann. The merry wit thought that an excellent idea and somehow induced the Bishop of London to make him a deacon and a priest on succeeding days. On his return to Jamaica, Wolcot found that the living in St. Ann had

not fallen vacant, as expected. He was given Vere instead, engaged a deputy and usually spent his Sundays in pigeon shooting. He doubled as physician to the troops, while still a rector, and in a few months virtually took up his residence at King's House. The Governor died in 1772. Wolcot went back to England with Lady Trelawny, who was reputed to have agreed to marry him. But she, too, died suddenly, and he turned to the role of Peter Pindar in the salons of London.

The agitation for the abolition of the slave trade had some slight effect upon the Church here. In 1797 the legislature passed a bill providing that rectors must give a portion of every Sunday to the instruction of slaves, which admittedly was the first sign of a change of front in this matter. Until then the blacks had been taught only by nonconformist ministers, chiefly the Moravians, and that in the face of official disapproval. But the Anglican clergy did not take their new duty very seriously. In *THE DIOCESE OF JAMAICA*, a general Church history, by the Rev. J. B. Ellis, an account is given of a rector who offered to baptize all the Negroes on a certain planter's estate for a fee consisting of a puncheon of rum. The planter, who happened to be virtuous, declined on the grounds that that kind of fee would nullify the merit of the baptism. The clergyman thereupon abused the other as a "rascal and scoundrel," and threw a glass, a bottle and a pitcher of water at his head. "No mention is made of the contents of the bottle," Ellis remarks slyly.

It is an extraordinary fact that the diocese was not created until 1824, when Dr. Christopher Lipscomb was appointed the first Anglican Bishop of Jamaica. He took up his duties the following year. This change was un-

doubtedly in response to the missionary activities of Knibb, Burchell, Philippo and others which threatened to capture the Negroes *en masse* as soon as slavery should be abolished. The Church had to do some missionary work of its own or sink into insignificance. Its clergy had to be brought under a central control.

Bishop Lipscomb was a sincere man. He and his immediate successors, Spencer and Courtenay, made real efforts to lift the Church above the level of a state-supported institution that went through the forms of an honoured ritual. But they simply could not get more than outward obedience from a body of privileged priests who had been enjoying the rewards of an undisciplined course. Some of the old-timers anchored firmly in their livings, objected openly to the presence of a bishop. Others promised but did not perform. Though naturally there were exceptions, the typical rector was much like that Rev. Mr. Cooke, of Morant Bay, who sent the sick pauper for relief to the jail where G. W. Gordon found him dying in a latrine.

Ellis makes a careful estimate, by means of total seating accommodation and average attendance, that at the time Crown Colony government was set up the Anglican Church could claim a little more than one-fourth of the churchgoers in Jamaica. It had first place, but was pressed closely by the Wesleyans and Baptists, with the other nonconformist sects and the Roman Catholics far behind. The census of 1943 shows the Anglicans still at the head of the list and still about one-fourth of the whole, in a population that had increased three-fold. Few of the Church's friends and none of its enemies would have predicted in 1866 that such would be the case.

Nuttall was prominent, for so young a clergyman, in

the discussions that preceded disestablishment. Governor Grant had spoken of various possible compromises in connection with endowments and the releasing of state-owned Church property to the diocese, all of which meant financing over a period of years. Nuttall proposed that the vested interests of Anglicanism should be calculated and paid in a lump sum, and that on those terms the Church should at once accept complete disendowment. But this was too radical for many of his seniors, who were anxious to cling to all possible money benefits that the future might hold.

Late in 1869 Governor Grant wrote to Bishop Courtenay that the act making provision for the Church would expire at the end of the year and would not be renewed. All the clergymen then on the Establishment, however, would continue to receive their stipends so long as they remained in active service, and they would be entitled to pensions from the state. Otherwise there was to be total severance. Physical property would be turned over to a legally constituted synod.

At the convention in Kingston which was hurriedly assembled, Nuttall "was one of those who met the altered conditions in a spirit of confidence and hope," Frank Cundall informs us. Nuttall introduced a financial scheme which was unanimously accepted. Later he became so active in the general affairs of the Church that his congregation at St. George's complained that he had little time for visiting among his parishioners. He offered to resign, was promptly petitioned not to do so and assured that if he did no more than preach the sermons at St. George's it would be satisfactory.

The power of the man's personality was already obvious, but he needed authority to carry out his ideas fully.

Apologists for the Anglican Church maintain that it rose to its responsibilities immediately after disestablishment. The truth would seem to be that there was little progress during the 1870s and some retrogression. The group of able clergymen was small: Charles F. Douet, George W. Downer, D. B. Panton, H. M. F. MacDermot, H. H. Kilburn and others, all of them admirers of Nuttall, though some were Low Church as he was, and some High Church.

In 1879 Bishop Courtenay resigned. It was proposed to elect a former New Zealand prelate, Dr. Jenner, but Nuttall opposed and blocked him on the grounds of his being an extreme ritualist. Probably on account of this action of his, Nuttall did not allow his own name to be put forward, though he had had offers of support. The English Committee of Reference (the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London) was asked to fill the vacancy. It chose Dr. W. G. Tozer, who had been Missionary Bishop of Central Africa. A worse selection could hardly have been made, for Tozer was a sufferer from chronic malaria and the after-effects of sun-stroke. He came to Jamaica, was ill most of the time for six months, then resigned and sailed for England without even saying goodbye to his clergy.

The way was now clear to have a head of the Church who belonged to the young generation, and who understood Jamaican problems. Both Nuttall and Douet were nominated. The former won, the election being made unanimous. He was only thirty-eight years old. He went to England for his consecration, which was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in St. Paul's Cathedral, in October, 1880.

“A summary review of the position of the Church at

this time," writes Ellis, "shows that there were seventy-five clergy in the diocese holding the Bishop's license, twenty-nine of whom were in receipt of stipend from the State; there were 25,000 registered members; the initial difficulties of disendowment were being overcome, but the financial strain of filling vacancies, caused by the death or retirement of state-paid clergy, was in great part still to be met; the Missionary Society's stations numbered only twenty-six; the canons, with the exception of those necessary for the carrying on of the routine business of the Church, were in a somewhat inchoate condition; the training of candidates for ordination was greatly handicapped for lack of money; many diocesan organizations and institutions were waiting their time to spring into life." This cannot be called a rosy picture of the accomplishments of the previous ten years. With only 25,000 registered members, the Anglican Church may be said to have been dying. It had had considerably more adherents in 1866.

The work of a bishop is difficult to make dramatic, his portrait difficult to draw. For the element of drama is subdued by the reticence that the calling imposes upon the man. In Enos Nuttall's case the mitre and the crosier tended to conventionalize a truly remarkable individual, at whose human realities it is well worth to try to probe.

He set about the task of rejuvenating the Church with no uncertain hand. He was a born ruler and disciplinarian. Nothing could be more typical of him than a letter he wrote early in his episcopate to a certain clergyman, acknowledging the latter's apparent sincerity but despairing utterly of his good judgment. "I must request you to take care that none of the petitions you propose . . . are ever forwarded to me," said Nuttall. "When you have lived a few years in Jamaica you will understand the worthless-

ness of such documents." He went on to demolish the other's illusions, won his respect and turned him into a useful country parson.

British Honduras and Panama were included for some years in Nuttall's diocese. He straightened out local difficulties in both countries with the same energy that he showed in Jamaica. His talent for raising funds was out of the common, and the results he got from the money were skilful. One governor complimented him on making a pound go farther than any man he had known. It was often said of Nuttall that he could just as easily have become one of the great bankers or merchant princes of his age as an outstanding prelate.

Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave offered him a seat on the Jamaica Schools Commission in 1881. Nuttall replied that his own experiences tended to confirm the view that committees, boards and commissions might ordinarily be described as "modern arrangements for facilitating the interchange of opinions and for the prevention of active work." Musgrave hastened to assure him that he agreed in principle, but that service on this commission would prove valuable. Having made his point, Nuttall accepted, became chairman in a year and a half, and exercised an overwhelming influence upon education in Jamaica for the rest of his life. He thereafter joined many other boards and committees, always spurring them to efficiency and generally dominating them. It may be said, in fact, that if he failed to dominate a board it was because he did not choose to do so, or felt that he was unable to give adequate time to it.

At the synod of 1888, Nuttall made a statement covering his more important activities as bishop. It was an

astonishing record, which can best be told in his own words. He said:

"I have presided at eight diocesan synods in Jamaica, which altogether have extended over forty working days and have required for that time, and for many days before and after in each case, close attention to business for eighteen hours out of every twenty-four. I have already presided at one diocesan synod in British Honduras, which included the complete reorganization of the affairs of the little Church in that outlying portion of the British Empire and, besides the private negotiations and public services and meetings, necessitated three weeks more to be spent in sea-voyaging and land travelling to accomplish the entire journey of 3,600 miles *via* New Orleans.

"I have taken part in two provincial synods, which together have occupied all the working hours of twenty-six days and one of which involved sea-voyages of nearly 5,000 miles, occupying six weeks.

"I have held twenty-eight ordinations in Jamaica, at which thirty-nine deacons and thirty-nine priests have been ordained; confirmed in Jamaica more than 20,000 persons and consecrated eleven churches.

"I have visited most of the churches in the diocese three times and have held confirmations in all; many of the churches I have visited several times, and in some of the most accessible I have held confirmations once every twelve or eighteen months; and I have also visited many of the out-stations and held confirmations in some. To accomplish this I have travelled in various ways, but chiefly in buggy and on horseback, about 20,000 miles. This is exclusive of about 8,000 miles of sea-voyaging and other

travelling in connection with my official visit to Honduras and to the Barbados provincial synod.

"I have delivered about 3,000 sermons and addresses. I have presided at about 1,400 meetings of such bodies as the Diocesan Council, parochial councils, Church committees, Jamaica Schools Commission, board of directors of the Mico Training College and Jamaica Female Training College. A considerable number of these meetings have occupied as much as three or four hours each.

"I have written about 40,000 letters, a large proportion of which have not been unimportant and have had to be copied for future reference; and not a few have been lengthy documents, dealing with questions of various kinds arising out of the disestablishment of the Church and the changed relations requiring to be established with the Government, the public, the clergy and the lay-members of the Church and have therefore been documents requiring to be prepared with care. I have also written and published several pamphlets and many circulars dealing with ecclesiastical, educational and social questions."

The man who gave this accounting was not in robust health. The synod responded by creating the post of Assistant Bishop, the nomination to be made by Nuttall. He chose Charles F. Douet, a native-born Jamaican, then an archdeacon and rector of the Cathedral Church, Spanish Town, who was unanimously confirmed.

In May, 1893, Nuttall was notified that the other bishops of the West Indian province of the Church had elected him Primate. This office had been in existence for some time, a natural outgrowth of co-operation. It was in effect an archbishopric without the full dignity. Four years later the bishops of the province, while at a Lambeth

Conference, acted upon an enabling resolution that had been passed by all the prelates in attendance and asked Nuttall to assume the title of Archbishop of the West Indies.

He had made frequent trips to England in past years, always to press the interests of his diocese, which counted to some extent upon financial assistance from various philanthropic societies connected with the parent Church. Now he represented the whole of the British Caribbean. Moreover, he had come to be regarded as one of the great constructive minds of the Anglican Church. Three Archbishops of Canterbury summoned him for special conferences and praised him in the warmest terms.

It is said on good authority that he was sounded out on his availability for a bishopric in England, supposedly the see of London. If so, he declined it. No answer of his is on record, but we have a letter that he wrote to the rector of St. Clement Danes, Strand, saying that "no position or emoluments that could be offered me in England would, in my opinion, justify my leaving my work here, until the Providence which plainly placed me where I am as plainly indicated for my removal . . . I cannot foresee the future, but as far as I can make a forecast it is that I shall wear out before very long and die at my post." Nuttall meant by these words that his identification with Jamaica was total and unalterable.

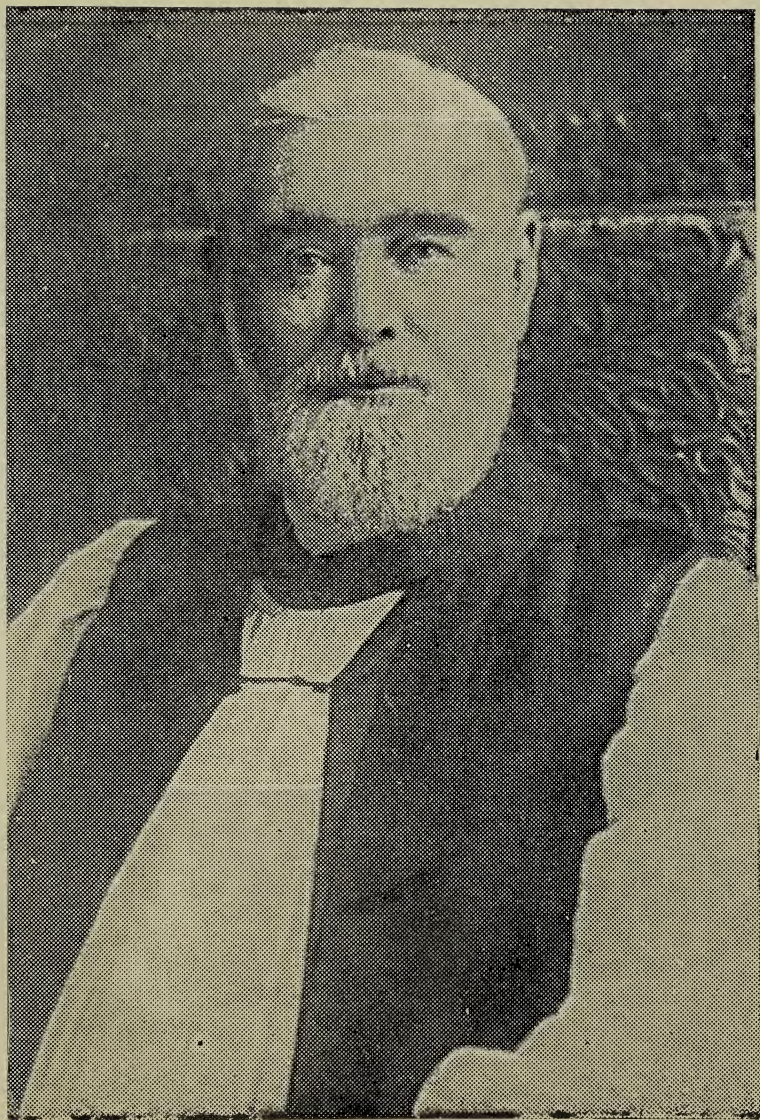
He was generally careful to avoid any overt discussion of politics. But he held strong opinions. After Sir Henry Norman arrived as Governor, with his "moderate step in advance" providing for the election of nine members of the Legislative Council, Nuttall wrote that there would some day be "inevitable complete political emancipation." This ought to come, he thought, only after Jamaicans had proved

themselves capable of "caring fully and well for all sections and interests in the community."

Observe the somewhat autocratic note in this. He plainly believed in eventual autonomy directed righteously from above by the propertied classes. Yet he was bold and honest, according to his lights. The last communication in his letter-book was addressed to Sir Henry Blake, an Irishman and a former Governor of Jamaica. It was written immediately after the Easter Rebellion in Dublin, at the height of World War 1, and in it he said: "As far as I can judge, the actual state of Ireland would not have been convincingly disclosed without it [the uprising]." That he had been unable to make that sort of allowance for the Morant Bay affair may be ascribed to his rigid youth as compared with his wise old-age.

To return to Sir Henry Norman's "moderate step in advance." The men who were elected to the Legislative Council at that time and for twenty years afterwards were conservative planters, merchants and professional men. Not all of them were pure white, but none were very dark in complexion. There was not one of the George William Gordon type among them. A reaction in subdued form to the social composition of the old Assembly had been obtained. These elected persons had advisory powers only, save that if all of them agreed they could block a money bill. They were most of them tradition-bound, pro-English, and they got along smoothly with the ex-officio element. The few who now and then experienced spasms of unruliness were treated indulgently and brought back into line.

That that should have been the political atmosphere of the middle years of the Crown Colony regime was largely due to the triumphant survival of the Anglican Church.



ARCHBISHOP ENOS NUTTALL



I do not mean that an ascendancy of Nonconformists would have brewed another rebellion like Paul Bogle's, or that they would have been anti-English, but they would assuredly have been less conventional. I know perfectly well that many elected members of the Legislative Council of that period were Dissenters, and others Catholics and Jews. These points can be granted without weakening my argument.

Voting was limited by a property qualification, and no one could be a candidate for the Council unless he owned land which brought a revenue of £150 a year, or had an income from other sources of £200 a year. The persons who aspired to the honorary rewards of Crown Colony politics were more likely to belong to the Anglican Church than any other. Their supporters at the polls were mainly their fellow-parishioners, or individuals who saw and accepted a relationship between Anglicanism and government. The Church was the most English of the influences that affected Jamaican thinking. Was it not, in common parlance, the Church of England? It helped to fix a pattern which has persisted down to the present nationalist movement, English parliamentary institutions being taken as a matter of course in preference to those of the United States or of neighbouring Caribbean countries. Some modern Jamaicans wish it had been otherwise, but the fact remains.

As I have shown, the regenerated Church was predominantly the work of Enos Nuttall. Without him it might well have sunk until it was a negligible entity. Add his sway over popular education, which was not so good because too exaggeratedly English for a New World tropical country, and it becomes clear that he was one of the most telling forces in the Island's history.

The late Herbert George de Lisser wrote that for the last twenty years of Nuttall's career he was "certainly the strongest man" in Jamaica. Midway of this period he was given his most dramatic opportunity, and he rose to it with precisely the stature accorded to him by de Lisser. This was the great earthquake of January 14, 1907. A West Indies Agricultural Conference was being held at the old Mico buildings, with Sir Daniel Morris in the chair. The Archbishop and Sir James Alexander Swettenham, the Governor, were on the platform. The afternoon session had just begun and a speaker was about to sit down when the first terrific shock rent Kingston apart. It is reported that virtually every one leapt to his feet in confusion, except Nuttall who said in his clear, resonant voice, "Gentlemen, we are in the hands of God." Then he knelt down and prayed.

The room had been severely damaged, but did not collapse and no one there was killed. The adjoining structures were laid partly in ruins, with some loss of life. Characteristically, the Archbishop's first move was to drive about the city and inspect as many of his church buildings as could be approached through the wreckage. Most of them had been hard hit. He was able to rescue and aid a number of sufferers. Only then did he go to his residence, Bishop's Lodge, and check on the safety of members of his family.

In the morning he formed a committee for the purpose of relieving the destitute, offered his services to the Governor, and was presently commissioned to form a general relief committee. Swettenham, an erratic boor with the manners of a sergeant-major, had been tearing around and urging on his underlings with curses; older

Jamaicans will not have forgotten the incident of the American admiral whose voluntary aid he rejected.

From the moment that Nuttall got his committee to work, he and not Swettenham was the efficient director of the good accomplished. A shed in the yard of St. George's rectory became his office, where he held countless meetings, listened to countless suggestions, and each time handed down a decision so worded that everyone present felt that it was pretty much what he had had in mind himself. Nuttall also personally carried out tasks of reconstruction, while the city vibrated at intervals with earthquake shocks of diminishing force.

He went to London two months later, accompanied by Arthur W. Farquharson. The object of the deputation was to negotiate assistance for Jamaica. Nuttall knew that an Imperial loan for the rebuilding of Kingston was an essential item. Swettenham opposed the idea. But Swettenham's unpopularity had been growing, and on the heels of an official apology made to the American Navy he resigned. There had been a local demand for Sydney Olivier, which Nuttall had done nothing to discourage before he sailed. An entry in the Archbishop's diary, dated April 1, speaks for itself:

"Mr. Olivier's appointment as Governor of Jamaica was announced in *THE TIMES* this morning. I had every reason on leaving the Colonial Office on Saturday to expect that this would be so. It removes a great load from me as to arrangements for future management of loan and grant . . . We are quite agreed on all points of importance."

These two vigorous personalities laboured in harmony throughout the next six years, save to some slight extent over the transforming of denominational schools into

national schools. Nuttall would have preferred to block this, but he saw that the trend of the times was in favour of the Governor's view and he yielded to it. When Olivier left office, Nuttall was within three years of the end of his long career. He suffered from diabetes and lesser ailments, but continued active until almost his last breath. On May 31, 1916, he died at Bishop's Lodge, was given what amounted to a state funeral, accompanied by a military band, and was buried in Halfway Tree churchyard. A bust of him has since been dedicated in the Cathedral at Spanish Town, plaques affixed in various places, a scholarship and a hospital endowed and named in his honour.

Nuttall was married in Jamaica at an early age to Lillie Chapman, the daughter of a Wesleyan missionary. There were five children of the union, two sons and three daughters, one of the daughters dying in infancy.

He was a massive figure of a man, tall and commanding in appearance with his bearded face, large mouth firmly set and piercing eyes. His walk was slow, his gestures restrained, his voice when speaking in public distinct and impressive. He seemed austere, even severe, when dealing with business and especially Church discipline in his office, for he had to get through a great amount of work and would tolerate no wasting of time. His punctuality was a model.

When he gave an interview for private reasons he could be kindly and attentive without seeming to be in a hurry. I went to see him several times in his later years, and that was my impression of him.

Clerical admirers say that he was a simple man. But, as H. G. de Lisser has pointed out, such a character as his could not be simple. Nuttall believed in his own ability,

and he was moved by an ambition to guide others, to direct events, and to win acceptance of his ideas on the level of statesmanship. He amply succeeded in doing this.



Robert Love

EMPHASIS was given in the preceding sketch to the fact that the non-responsible Legislative Council of the middle years of Crown Colony government was a tame and conventional body. The proud individualism of the old Tory element was no less absent than the constructive liberalism that had had Jordon for spokesman, or the humanitarian radicalism that had had Gordon. The mood prevailed that none but Victorian gentlemen were ever likely to get a chance to sit at Headquarters House, that if an agitator should happen to be returned he would be put in Coventry, and that at all events the one thing that could not possibly occur was the election of a black member.

But outside the Legislative Council Jamaican political action did not long remain under the pall of shocked silence that had resulted from the Morant Bay Rebellion. I offer the career of Dr. Robert Love as being the one most representative of the transition period, both in the matter of ideas that appealed to those of the populace who were willing to do some independent thinking, and in actual accomplishment.

Joseph Robert Love — he always called himself just Robert — was born in Nassau, Bahama Islands, in October, 1839, the son of a shipwright who had served for seven years on a British war vessel. The boy was sent to a

school then located in the Bahamas which formed part of the Mico benefaction. He passed on to government schools, proved an outstanding scholar and became himself a teacher. After some years spent in this calling, he went to the United States where he studied for the Episcopalian (Anglican) priesthood. He took orders in Florida, and his first appointment was as curate of St. John's Church, Jacksonville, Florida. He went on to Savannah, Georgia, where he founded the St. Augustine's mission and served as its curate. It should be borne in mind that while in the South he was assigned to Negro congregations. But in 1876 he was transferred to St. Phillip's Church, Buffalo, N.Y., where under the liberal Bishop Coke he was not thus restricted.

Love showed considerable gifts as a preacher and he was often invited to take the pulpit in "white" churches. He delivered sermons even in exclusive Trinity Parish, New York City, being the first Negro clergyman who had had that distinction. As he grew older, however, his views on orthodox religion became decidedly personal. The subject remained one of his master passions. In this he resembled George William Gordon, though he was less evangelistic and more given to erudite controversy. Routine clerical work was not for him. He turned to medicine and completed his course at the University of Buffalo, matriculating in 1880, the eleventh in a class of 150.

Robert Love decided to return to the tropics. But he chose the Republic of Haiti, instead of his native Bahamas, and landed in Port-au-Prince when he was forty-one years old. He arrived early in the presidency of General Lysius Salomon, who welcomed the recruit, appointed him to the medical department and soon promoted him to a high executive post. Love was permitted also to function as an

Anglican clergyman. He became the rector of the Church of the Redeemer, Port-au-Prince.

President Salomon's record was excellent, but curious. He had been Minister of Finance in Soulouque's first cabinet, and when that grotesque individual proclaimed himself emperor, with the title of Faustin I, he made Salomon Duke of Saint-Louis du Sud. Shortly afterwards Salomon was sent to France as minister plenipotentiary. He already knew that country well and he lived there for many years. But he had been in Haiti when Soulouque fell and had accompanied the latter into exile. It had taken twenty years of manoeuvring for him to attain the chief magistracy. His programme included financial and educational reforms and, unlike most Haitian presidents, he carried these out.

Salomon was physically a giant, several inches above six feet in height and broad in proportion. He was one of the blackest of Negroes, which was the case too with Dr. Love. It may have been a link between them. There was something else, and this is of great interest from our standpoint. The first haven of refuge of the ex-Emperor Soulouque and General Salomon had been Kingston, Jamaica. They had made a long stay, and an intimacy had sprung up between Salomon and George William Gordon. The two Haitians were in Jamaica throughout the Morant Bay disorders. They sailed with their wives on the French ship *Caravelle* on November 16, 1865, about three weeks after Gordon was hanged.

In his book, *THE ENGLISH IN THE WEST INDIES*, James Anthony Froude makes the prejudiced statement at second-hand that Haiti was then "the most ridiculous caricature of civilisation in the whole world." Commenting on the friend-

ship between Gordon and Salomon, he remarks that it is "worth noting, as throwing light on Gordon's political aspirations." This is nonsense, for Gordon had been no revolutionist of the Haitian type, whatever Paul Bogle may have been. I consider it probable, however, that Salomon was moved to sympathy for the Jamaican peasant by the events he observed here, and that it was he who first turned Love's attention to the problems of this Island.

Be that as it may, Love remained in Haiti for nine years, acquired a fluent knowledge of the French language and soaked himself in the history of the Black Republic. He was not favourably impressed by the country's nominal Roman Catholicism, corrupted as this was among the ignorant masses by Voodoo beliefs. In fact, he developed a strong bias, especially against the Jesuits. Shortly after his protector, Salomon, had been driven from office Love moved to Jamaica, the year being 1889.

His early activities in Kingston are obscure. Seemingly he made no application for admission to the Anglican clergy, but he did some informal preaching and busied himself with writing a book of no great merit, entitled ROMANISM IS NOT CHRISTIANITY, which was published in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1892. Then Robert Love found his true vocation, at the age of fifty-five. He started a weekly newspaper, the JAMAICA ADVOCATE, tackled social and political questions from the black man's point of view and rapidly became influential.

The ADVOCATE was one of the last small personal organs made possible by the low cost of paper and of typesetting by hand. Rarely exceeding four or six pages, it was not unlike Jordon's WATCHMAN both in appearance and policy. But, as befitted the more sober times, its voice was gentler.

Already in existence was GALL'S NEWS LETTER, a successful scandal sheet, the mouthpiece of James Gall who though utterly fearless was certainly no altruist. Love set out in his first issue to capture the attention of the public by means of two frontal assaults: one on Gall, and the other on Fr. John O'B. Pardow, a priest who was lecturing in Jamaica on Catholic doctrine.

The dispute with Gall was naturally the livelier of the two. Love described his enemy as "the common slanderer and cynic jackal of Jamaica." He analysed certain articles in the NEWS LETTER, pointed out the double meanings they contained, and denounced the motive for printing them. He ran over and over again a brief paragraph demanding that the NEWS LETTER be suppressed for the good of the community. James Gall answered him, but had so poor a case that in less than a year he was forced to drop the most objectionable features of his paper.

Fr. Pardow's views were courteously but firmly countered by Love, both on the public platform and in the ADVOCATE. Kingston became impassioned over the discussion, and of course this won subscribers for the new weekly. The priest concluded his mission and left the Island. So the final word lay with Love, who assembled all his arguments and published in booklet form what he termed a "refutation" of Pardow.

Other issues came to the fore. In February, 1895, the Cuban War of Independence was launched under the leadership of Jose Marti and General Maximo Gomez. The ADVOCATE commented as follows: "We have no sympathy with revolutions, except in so far as they may be absolutely necessary for the vindication of rights denied . . . When

the attempt to reform is left to be made from below, it takes the form of Revolution."

At the same time Love began to criticise the drawbacks of the Crown Colony regime in Jamaica and to plead mildly for self-government. Gall and other opponents accused him of dangerous political ambition and coined the epithet "Loveism" as a sneer. The doctor replied a little quaintly that he was glad to accept "Loveism," which he defined as a sponsorship of fraternity, and added: "We love the white man because he is a brother; we love the coloured man because he is a son; we love the black man because we must love ourself." Shortly afterward he opened an editorial, entitled *Dangerous Men and Dangerous Subjects*, with the phrases: "Some are whispering that *we* (of the *Advocate*) are dangerous. We don't care if we are."

The big local event of 1895 was the arrest and trial of Alexander Bedward. It is, I suppose, a virtually forgotten incident, but it had historical moment, and Love did not fail to perceive its implications. Bedward was primarily as every one knows, a religious revivalist, not quite sane, who proclaimed himself "bishop" of a sect of his own and baptised thousands of converts in the Hope River at August Town. Nobody troubled to recall that Paul Bogle in 1865 had also been an ardent independent Baptist. Bogle's agitation had gone deep below the surface among the illiterate peasants, and it might be expected to crop up again in a similar setting. Jamaica was startled to learn that the apprehension of Bedward was not for intemperate revivalism, getting money under false pretences, or plain disorderly conduct. It was for sedition. Specifically he was charged with having told an audience on a given occasion:

"Brethren, hell will be your portion if you do not rise up and crush the white men. The time is coming. There is a white wall and a black wall, but now the black wall is becoming bigger than the white, and we must knock the white wall down. The white wall has oppressed us for years. Now we must oppress the white wall. The Government passes laws that oppress the black people; they take their money out of their pockets, rob them of their bread, and they do nothing for it. Let them remember the Morant war. . . . The only thing that can save you is the August Town healing stream."

Love gave an entire page in his *ADVOCATE* to the testimony. He was worried and he deplored Bedward's language. But as the trial proceeded it became clear that the "prophet", as he was called, had no political organisation, was not a conspirator, and had simply revived old grievances in hysterical terms. The judge declared him to be insane and ordered him committed to the asylum. A few days later Bedward's lawyer obtained a writ of *habeas corpus*, and because of irregularities in the trial the man was released. Years later he was again to be sent to the asylum, and to die there. But in 1895 he returned to August Town, where his followers welcomed him with one of their most lusty hymns:

"Dip dem, Bedward, dip dem; dip dem in de healing stream.

Some come from de Eas', dem favour wild beas'.

Dip dem in de healing stream."

The result caused Love to change his tone. He now described Bedward as "an insignificant, half-witted creature," and said that bringing him into the limelight by

arresting him had been a mistake. Which was true enough. An undertone of Morant Bay, however, lingered for a long while at the "prophet's" river-bank headquarters. I interviewed him there once myself and wrote that I found "a touch of political ferment in his revivalism."

The decade beginning in the middle Nineties proved to be one of fruitful struggle for Robert Love. He concentrated on raising the Negro's level in the community. One of his main themes was: "Educate your black girls; a people cannot rise above the standards of its womanhood." A fair number of Negro boys were then being sent to secondary schools and colleges, but usually the girls were not given a chance to go beyond elementary classes. The change brought about was partly due to him.

He became a very active lecturer. His talks on the life of Toussaint l'Ouverture, Haiti's first and noblest patriot, were so brilliant that people travelled from all parts of the Island to hear him in Kingston and Spanish Town. The Custos of St. Catherine, the Hon. Thomas Lloyd Harvey, was chairman on a certain occasion and was so carried away by Love's oratory that he showered praises on him. Archbishop Nuttall said that it was "an intellectual pleasure" to listen to a speech by him. William Morrison, headmaster of the Collegiate High School; the Rev. William Clarke Murray, governor of York Castle High School; and Dr. George Courtney Henderson, the physician, were among those who figured as his backers and close friends.

Love waged a determined campaign to encourage Negroes to stand for seats in the Legislative Council. Aware of the opposition that would have to be fought, he admitted early in the *ADVOCATE*: "Our people shrink

from a clash which gives promise of unpleasant accompaniments." From time to time he printed lists of really able black men whom he considered fit to be candidates. In the elections of 1896 he backed Alexander Dixon in St. Elizabeth against T. P. Leyden, and Josiah Smicle in St. Thomas against Samuel Constantine Burke. He furiously denied that in a speech he had made at Morant Bay for Smicle he had urged the people to adopt, "Colour for colour!" as their campaign cry. Merit was all that counted with him, he said, a dubious thesis in that particular case, for the light-coloured S. C. Burke was a gifted and patriotic Jamaican.

Both Love's candidates were defeated in 1896. At the next elections it was a slightly different story. Love in the interim had won a seat on the old City Council of Kingston. He now backed Dixon again and himself ran in St. Andrew. The doctor did not expect a personal victory on that occasion, nor did he gain one. He devoted his best efforts to the struggle in St. Elizabeth. This led to a passage-of-arms between him and the Hon. John Vassall Calder that caused much acrimony at the time, but can be chuckled over today. Calder was a nominated member of the Legislative Council and a member of the Privy Council. He took the platform against Dixon, but it was Love whom he attacked for the most part. After boasting that he could trace his descent for two hundred years, Calder added:

"Dr. Love must remember that his ancestors were my ancestors' slaves, and as such he could never be my equal. He is aggrieved because my forefathers rescued him from the bonds of thralldom and deprived him of the privilege of being King of the Congo, enjoying the epi-

cureal and conjugal orgies and the sacrificial pleasures of his ancestral home in Africa."

In reply Love said that Calder had expressed himself ambiguously, since "the men who enslaved my ancestors were not the men who released them. The men who enslaved my ancestors were the Blackbeards and the Morgans, a type of Calder; the men who released them were the Wilberforces and the Granville Sharpes, a different type altogether. After all, slavery is but a preying of the strong upon the weak, and all nations have undergone the ordeal in their time, including Calder's nation. The shame is not on the slave, but on the tyrant who enslaves him. Man was never made to be the property of man. Mr. Calder boasts that he can trace his ancestors back two hundred years. What of that! I can go back to Adam. When he said, however, that had my ancestors not been removed from Africa I would be sitting on the Congo throne, I verily believe that, and since 'Authority is authority, where'er it's to be found,' as King of the Congo I would be the equal of the King of England. Calder would have had to approach both of us with that due deference which subjects show to royalty."

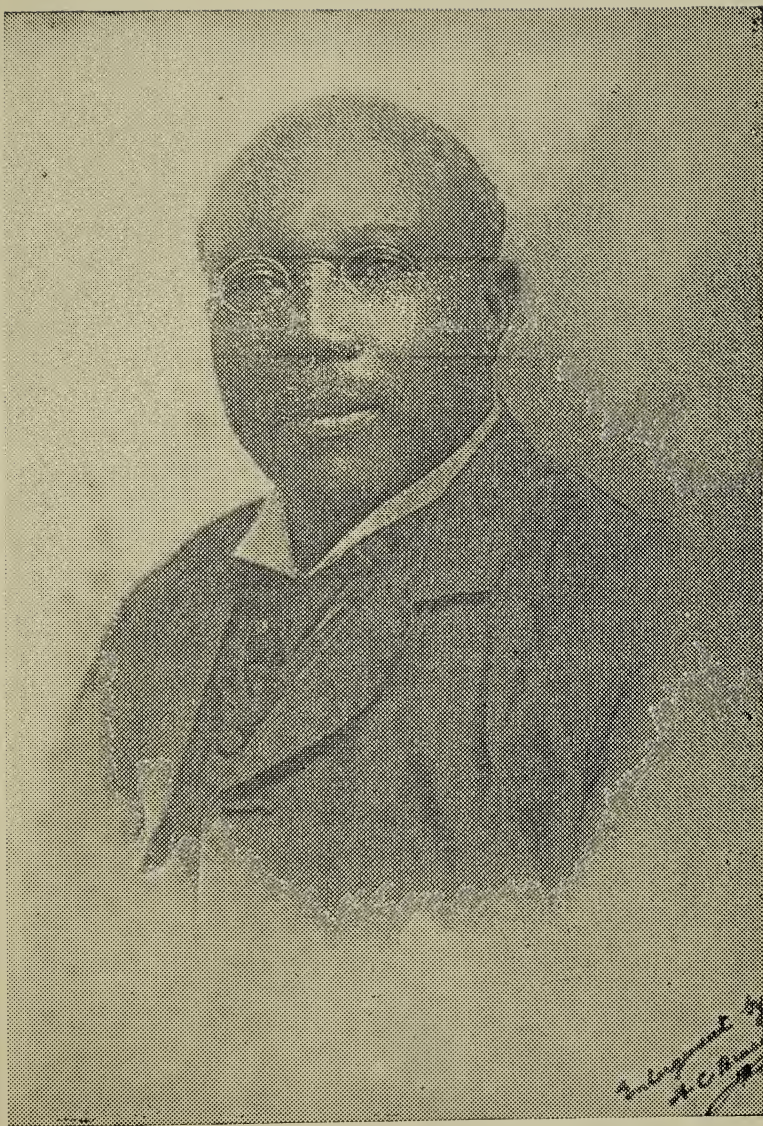
It was generally agreed that Love had had the better of the argument. Alexander Dixon came through at the polls, the first black man to be elected to the Legislative Council. But he was not a dynamic personality. Rather he had common sense and an amiable humour. He wanted more than anything else to be liked. His colleagues did get to like him, and incidentally they regarded him as a political accident.

Another controversy in which Love engaged at about this time was over a book entitled **BLACK JAMAICA**, by

William Pringle Livingstone, the editor of the *DAILY GLEANER*. Livingstone was a Scotsman, a Presbyterian and a sociologist, as well as a journalist and author, who spent some ten years in the Island. No one could have been more sympathetic to the Negro peasants than he. He approached their problems as being those of the descendants of slaves who had been left by their emancipators to sink or swim. In his opinion, they had made pretty good progress on their own account. But he had an exaggerated notion of "the white man's burden," conceived he it said in the spirit of the missionary and not of the imperialist.

In Europe it was the current fashion to accept two points as gospel: that all civilising merit originated in the temperate zone, and that the Negro race was childlike compared with the Caucasian. Only if northerners came to teach and help could the Negro be brought to the level where he could use his latent capacities. The individual northerner, however, must not linger too long in the tropics, or the tropics would sap his virtues. These views were set forth bluntly in Livingstone's *BLACK JAMAICA*, and they caused a certain amount of offence. The Negroes did not like to be considered infantile, while the planter and merchant class resented the doctrine that on the whole it should regard itself as debased by the climate.

Love took up the cudgels from the black man's angle, contending that his people had been libelled. He delivered his chief address at the old Collegiate Hall, the press hailing his oratorical style as "masterly" and his attitude as having been "free from rancour." Sydney Olivier, then Colonial Secretary, moved the vote of thanks; he praised Love's scholarly attainments and struck a note of humour by advancing a theory about the physique and



DR. ROBERT LOVE

colour of Adam. Love had said in his speech that Adam was a brown man.

The political progress of Love was marked by his election to the Parochial Board of St. Andrew, and subsequently to the chairmanship of that board. He became a member of the Kingston General Commissioners and of the Board of Trustees of Wolmer's. The rough-and-ready Governor Swettenham thought highly of Love and made him a Justice of the Peace for Kingston, to the annoyance, it is said, of the Custos of the day, who had regarded the city magistracy as a perquisite to be kept for his own exclusive circle.

Love's most amusing quip was made in connection with Wolmer's. A man of limited intelligence who had found his way onto the Board was told by the chairman that he was a blockhead. "And how did he reply?" exclaimed Love. "In the plenitude of his ignorance he turned on Mr.—— and smote him with the jawbone of an ass."

The crowning episode of Love's career was his battle for the seat for St. Andrew in the general elections held in January, 1906. His opponent was an English retired colonel named F. B. P. White. The colonel had little to recommend him except his military record. He was eccentric, had singular theories about earthquakes and was given to waging fantastic lawsuits. His political ideas were at least forty years out of date. But White was white — simon-pure white — and there were many who did not see how he could possibly be defeated in suburban St. Andrew by the black Dr. Love.

Bumbling noisily, Colonel White announced a programme of a sort at his first meeting at Halfway Tree.

He would introduce a bill to make it obligatory to open the sessions of the Legislative Council with prayer, and he would seek to reform the marriage laws of Jamaica. As an afterthought, he declared that he was quite satisfied with the existing Crown Colony Constitution. Love, who was in the audience, replied to him with rollicking sarcasm.

The next day Robert C. Guy, the editor of the *DAILY TELEGRAPH*, commented as follows: "The campaign promises to be amusing. If ridicule kills, Colonel White's political career will be short-lived; for no public man has been made to cut a sorrier figure than the gallant retired officer. . . . The most pleasing feature of Dr. Love's speech was its complete freedom from personal abuse. Nobody who has watched his career can doubt that he is a man of great ability and considerable culture." This was generous on the part of Guy, a Scotsman, whom Love had sometimes used as a journalistic target after he had disposed of Gall.

In the *JAMAICA TIMES* the scrupulously honest native-born T. H. MacDermot (Tom Redcam) wrote: "There is no doubt about the fact that Dr. Love is one of the ablest public men in the Island. As a journalist, he is the equal of any journalist here, and perhaps their superior in his power of attack. He is fearless, sympathetic and determined. . . . He was born for public life."

As the *DAILY TELEGRAPH* had predicted, the campaign was decidedly amusing, but it was more than that. The committee that rallied to the support of Love included the names of distinguished residents, who a generation earlier would have been without fail on the other side. William Morrison acted as his chairman, and introduced

him with the slogan, "Good wine needs no bush."

At Love's first meeting, Colonel White stood up and asked him, with veiled reference to his birth in the Bahamas, "Are you a Jamaican?"

"It is my country," answered Love.

"Jamaica is my country as well."

"You, however, are like the average Englishman who lands here. You have brought with you the prejudices of the Englishman, who falsely thinks that he is master. The votes of the electors will show the contrary." (Up-roarious applause).

At the last minute a third candidate, Oscar Feurtado, filed nominating papers with the avowed object of splitting Love's vote and throwing the victory to White. It was too late. Love carried the seat by a proportion of two to one. But what did this signify in the matter of actual ballots cast? The election of 1906 was probably low water-mark of unconcern over choosing members of the Legislative Council. The figures may astonish younger Jamaicans.

The number of registered voters on the list for the entire Island was 8,607, or about one per cent. of the estimated population. In St. Andrew there were only 620 registered voters out of a population of some 38,000, and of these just 330 went to the polls. Love received 186 votes, White 96, and Feurtado 12. Thirty-seven ballots were spoilt or rejected; at Bull Bay, of 19 votes cast, 14 were spoilt. In the parish of Hanover no candidate was even nominated, and no interest whatsoever was shown in the election. The high property qualification required of candidates must be borne in mind, of course. It was not a matter of any John Smith filing

papers and being returned by default. Well-to-do men brushed aside the honour because they knew they would be powerless at Headquarters House.

All the same, the triumph of Love in St. Andrew was important for two reasons. The handful of citizens who used the ballot box were "ten-shilling voters" accustomed to backing white and light-coloured men; they broke a precedent in voting for Love. Again, his victory was a turning-point for the whole country. It encouraged Negroes to feel that they could at least make themselves heard politically. The election of Dixon had failed to do this. But Love was known to be a fighter. With his appearance in the Legislative Council there began the last phase of that unsatisfactory body's existence: the phase of Negro preponderance, except on the nominated side of the House. The elected members did not demand the Constitution of 1944, but in a neutral, paradoxical way they helped to make something of the sort inevitable.

The speeches that Robert Love made on the floor were of less consequence than his mere presence there. Only a short period of activity was left to him, anyway. He was struck down with aphasia, which much impaired his mental vigour and forced him to cut his quota of work to a minimum. Yet he stayed in the limelight almost until the end.

No one save the ineffable Colonel White ever challenged his sincere Jamaicanism. This was remarkable, seeing that he did not come here until he was fifty-one and was over sixty-six when elected to the Legislative Council. Because of his fervid admiration for Toussaint l'Overture, he was sometimes asked by a member of an audience if he had been born in Haiti. Love welcomed

the chance to say No, and then to explain why all men whose forebears had been slaves should venerate the memory of Toussaint. He liked and often quoted T. H. MacDermot's appraisal of the Haitian liberator as "one of the greatest souls that ever entered this mundane sphere."


Love's best organised literary work was a short book entitled ST. PETER'S TRUE POSITION IN THE CHURCH, published in Plymouth, in 1897.

I can find no record that he was ever married, and though I have heard of relatives of his now living in Jamaica I have not been able to locate them. He died in 1913 and was buried in Halfway Tree churchyard.



Thomas Henry MacDermot

(Tom Redcam)

AMAICA'S concern with politics, social reform and religion through most of the Nineteenth Century was far greater than her interest in local culture. The newspapers, as we have seen, were small and extremely partisan. No histories were written to equal those of Edward Long and Bryan Edwards in the preceding century. Such general literature as saw the light consisted of essays and poetry, trivial in content and not typically Jamaican, being mainly the work of outsiders living here. Yet the Island was obviously rich in the raw materials of art, to give this word its broadest scope. There would be no ready-made audience, and the pioneer would have to live a sacrificial life in order to create one; that much was certain. When would he appear?

The answer came in the person of Thomas Henry MacDermot (Tom Redcam), Jamaica's first native-born literary journalist, her first important poet to be inspired by history and the scene about him, her first critic who believed in the rightness of having a literature distinct from that of other lands. He was much else, as I shall try to make clear. Every good cause was served by him. He was an object-lesson to a whole generation, and his influence is still being felt.

Thomas Henry MacDermot, born on June 26, 1870, was the son of the Anglican rector of Arthur's Seat, Clarendon, the Rev. H. C. P. MacDermot, and of a former Miss Rutty. The MacDermots were of Irish origin, had been settled in Jamaica since the Eighteenth Century and reputedly were pure white. The Ruttys had come recently from the south of England.

The early boyhood of Tom, as everybody called him, shaped his sympathies more positively than is often the case. He was the third child and the only son in a family of five, and he scarcely remembered his father who died of smallpox while Tom was still a youngster. His mother was left in comparative poverty. She moved to a small place six miles from Falmouth, and as it was impossible to get regularly to the Anglican church she and the children attended a nearby Presbyterian church. Tom's schooling began at the age of eight; it was received mostly in Falmouth under the Misses Knibb and ministers of various denominations, including a black Presbyterian minister. One of his teachers was Miss Annie Fray, a granddaughter of William Knibb, the champion of the slaves. Finally Tom attended the Church of England Grammar School in Kingston. He thus escaped narrow sectarianism. At the same time he absorbed the lore of the fight for freedom that the nonconformist missionaries had made.

On the physical side the influences were most important. Another family move occurred, this time to a property named Lansquinet, farther in the interior of Trelawny on the banks of the Martha Brae River. Tom was then a half-grown lad. His mother had taught him to feel that there was nothing degrading in manual work.

He took personal charge of the place, "milked the cows, shod the horses, mended the harness, picked and sold coconuts," as has been recorded in a memoir of him. In his spare time, he loved to ride along the Martha Brae and down to the north coast.

It was a countryside full of associations with the aboriginal Arawaks and their Spanish conquerors. Indian kitchen middens had been found nearby. Christopher Columbus had discovered Jamaica at a point in St. Ann, close to the Trelawny border. The abortive Spanish village of Melilla is held by some authorities to have been located on the Martha Brae, near Falmouth. All these things soaked deeply into Tom MacDermot's consciousness and reappeared later in his writings.

The first regular job he had was at teaching. He was placed in charge of the little elementary school at Bellevue in the neighbourhood, but remained there only a few months. For the family made a third migration, and a radical one. It went to the Cayman Islands for economic reasons and stayed there for almost six years. Tom established a school at West Bay, Grand Cayman, where he taught all the lower grades and introduced some of the features of secondary education. He founded a school library and organised cottage entertainments. Driven by an impulse to overwork himself, he showed a disregard of health and comfort which became more and more marked as he grew older. His home was at Georgetown, five miles from West Bay, and the trip morning and evening put an extra strain on him.

He also started to do newspaper work, acting virtually free of charge as the Cayman correspondent of several Kingston journals, including the *GLENER*. It was

good practice, no doubt, but he does not seem to have written anything at that period that he wished to preserve. His larger interests were assuming form, and he began to correspond with writers and editors abroad. W. T. Stead of the *REVIEW OF REVIEWS*, then one of the most prominent fighting journalists in England, wrote him an appreciative letter.

I feel that the isolation and intellectual loneliness of his years in the Cayman Islands fixed the pattern of MacDermot's ideals. Ascetic by nature, he deliberately chose a course of self-abnegation from which he never swerved. The decision might not have been reached at quite so early an age if he had stayed in Jamaica. But he would have arrived at it nonetheless. There was a strong resemblance between his temperament and that of José Martí, whom Cubans call the Apostle.

The climax of Tom MacDermot's efforts in Grand Cayman was a severe nervous breakdown, which forced him to return to Jamaica for medical treatment. He was to be ill for a year, as it turned out, a year of mental anguish and depression. The Rev. W. Clarke Murray, head of York Castle school, was his uncle-in-law on the mother's side. The Murrays took care of him during his illness, and Dr. Murray's conception of public service had a lasting effect upon his mind. Tom became one of the teachers at York Castle. While he was there he wrote much prose and verse, adopting the pseudonym Tom Redcam, which is simply MacDermot spelled backward, and publishing under that name in the Kingston newspapers and the old *VICTORIA QUARTERLY*. His interest in Jamaica history sharpened. It would appear that he drafted the first scenes of his play in blank verse about

Columbus, an important work with which I shall deal later.

York Castle proved to be only an interlude. The school was short of funds and presently had to be closed. Tom went to Kingston, resolved to make a profession of journalism. He was taken on as assistant editor of the JAMAICA POST, a former weekly then struggling as a daily, which had once had some prestige but was on its last legs. The editor was an Englishman named Laidman. He and MacDermot improved the condition of the Post, only to see it sold in violation of promises that had been made. Laidman did not choose to accept employment with the new owners, and MacDermot felt that he must do the same on a point of honour. Grievously poor as he was MacDermot could ill afford the gesture, yet he did not hesitate.

He was taken on at the GLEANER shortly afterwards as an occasional reporter and proof-reader. The pay was small in those days. He had trouble with his eyes. Nevertheless, it proved a good connection, because of the kindly understanding shown by W. P. Livingstone, the editor, the man I mentioned in the preceding sketch as the author of BLACK JAMAICA. Livingstone had literary tastes. He believed in giving local writers an outlet, and when he discovered that Tom MacDermot had unusual talent he went out of his way to encourage him. But the strong eyesight needed for proof-reading was something he could not give, and Tom had to resign.

His next move seemed utterly quixotic to his friends. A weekly called the JAMAICA TIMES had been started by Walter R. Durie a young Englishman who worked on the GLEANER as a reporter. It had a circulation of only

about 800, was not earning its expenses and would not have been regarded by any businessman as a sound prospect for survival. To MacDermot it was a newspaper that had, at all events, got beyond the dream stage. It was being published. He was without a penny to found his own paper, but if he helped to make a success of this one he would have the medium he required to carry out his ideas. So he went to Durie and offered to work for nothing until the *TIMES* was able to pay him a salary. He was accepted, and with this association his singularly fruitful career as an editor got under way.

I cannot imagine how he lived at first. He was part mystic, and it is certain that if he had to starve sometimes he did not care. The period of extreme hardship was not too long drawn out. The paper gained in circulation, and MacDermot was put on salary. Eventually the *TIMES* had around 4,000 subscribers, a figure that gave it consequence as a moulder of public opinion.

Durie remained for years the titular editor, though he soon concentrated on the business end and broadened out as a merchant. He established the Times Store on King Street. MacDermot was perfectly satisfied to be called the assistant editor. In point of fact he was the soul of the paper. His chief policies were to give the teachers, and especially the country teachers, an organ that paid attention to their many problems; to feature agricultural news and practical hints for farmers; to support philanthropic activities; and along with all this to make the *TIMES* a genuinely literary weekly.

Before we look at some of the details of his work, let us consider what manner of man he was. His body was somewhat frail, but he held it straight and habitually

dressed in a white drill suit of a military cut. He kept the tunic buttoned to the chin and it had an upstanding collar. His complexion was sallow brunet, his eyes shaded by dark glasses when he was not reading or writing; he wore a heavy brown moustache. A nervous tautness was apparent in his speech and the way he moved his hands.

The basic opinions of Tom MacDermot as a Jamaican would form an interesting subject for closer analysis than I can give it here. I can only generalise. He had grown up under the Crown Colony regime and accepted it as a necessary transition system. As a liberal Anglican, he breathed and loved the pro-English atmosphere preserved by Archbishop Nuttall. He had a romantic faith in the British Empire. Withal he was keenly nationalistic. His ideal was Jamaica within the Empire, but Jamaica as a recognised entity, and there was often to be found an unhappy note in his writings when he thought that his native country was being treated as a stepchild. A struggle for freedom in any other part of the world moved him to instant sympathy. Read the subtly ambiguous poem that he wrote on the outbreak of the Cuban War of Independence:

CUBA

(What the heart of the Jamaican said
to Cuba in 1895)

Sister ! the sundering sea
Divides us not from thee;
The ocean's homeless roar
May sever shore from shore.

Beneath the bitter brine,
Our hand is locked in thine.
Cold custom chides us down
And stills us with a frown;
But we like lovers twain
Are one in joy and pain,
Whose mutual love is known
But may not yet be shown.
With clasped hands we convey
The love we may not say.

How MacDermot would have chosen sides during a period of agitation in Jamaica for autonomy must remain an open question. There was no such crisis in his lifetime.

In an article entitled *The Present Condition of Jamaica and Jamaicans*, which he contributed to the October, 1899, issue of *THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE*, he speaks of the Government here as being stable, but "dull and undiscerning." He adds that it was "not devoid of good intentions, but with little energy and enterprise, and saturated with languid conservatism." In another paragraph he says that it was "stolid, honest, but a little stupid." His remarks on the character of his own people get well below the surface, and fifty-two years afterwards are still worth pondering: "The fatal defect in West Indians is their inability to unite even when affected by a common grievance. Hot-tempered, impulsive and talkative, they are ill-equipped for the give and take, for the ready but discreet compromise necessary in the formation of parties which are to be permanently influential with governments. . . . Jamaicans display brightness, but it is very easily changed into bitterness. They almost all

make the mistake of taking it for granted that because you have proved your opponent to be wrong you have proved yourself to be right."

Speaking for the "whites and browns," he declares in the same article: "Today we lead; tomorrow we advise; and on the day following we are co-workers together with our black countrymen. . . . It is as our actions and opinions relate to them [the blacks] that they will stand applauded or condemned by the future historian." The position was a progressive one to take in the year 1899.

MacDermot goes on to discuss the common interests of Canada and this Island. Talk of annexation to the Dominion was in the air. He cautiously points out—and later events upheld him—that both parties might find the notion impracticable. However, he advocates better trade relations. It was a strong article, and my impression is that it led to his being urged to come to Canada and enter journalism there. He put the temptation aside. Then, as later, he believed and expressed the view publicly that a man owed to his native country such talents as he possessed.

He was a great lover of nature, being especially fond of birds, dogs and flowers. Hope Botanical Gardens was one of his favourite places of relaxation, and he would often go there on a Sunday morning with books in his side pockets and paper and pencil for the jotting down of the thoughts that occurred to him. At other times, alone or in company, and notwithstanding his frail physique, he would climb afoot deep into the St. Andrew mountains, or tramp for hours along the seashore. He loved to visit historical sites.

But people, in the mass, as a kaleidoscope of types

and emotions, were still more interesting to him. He professed to abhor the ugliness, the overcrowding and heat of Kingston, as compared with the countryside. This did not prevent him, during his frequent moods of enquiry, from roaming the streets just to observe the faces and mannerisms of men and women. He had the eye that pierces through masks, and the onlooker who supposed Tom MacDermot's course to be aimless would have been wrong.

To deny that he had an eccentric streak in him would, however, be an error in portraiture. There were numerous occasions when he seemed remote from the world, absorbed totally by books or dreams. After I first knew him, early in the present century, I used to see him striding downtown to his office, his nose sunk in a volume, reading as he walked, while his feet by some magic of instinct avoided obstacles and negotiated the irregular sidewalks. Also, he would stand in his garden, his head thrown far backward and stare at cloud formations in the sky for minutes on end, to the astonishment of the passerby. Such oddities sprang from his intense powers of concentration and the austerity of his ego.

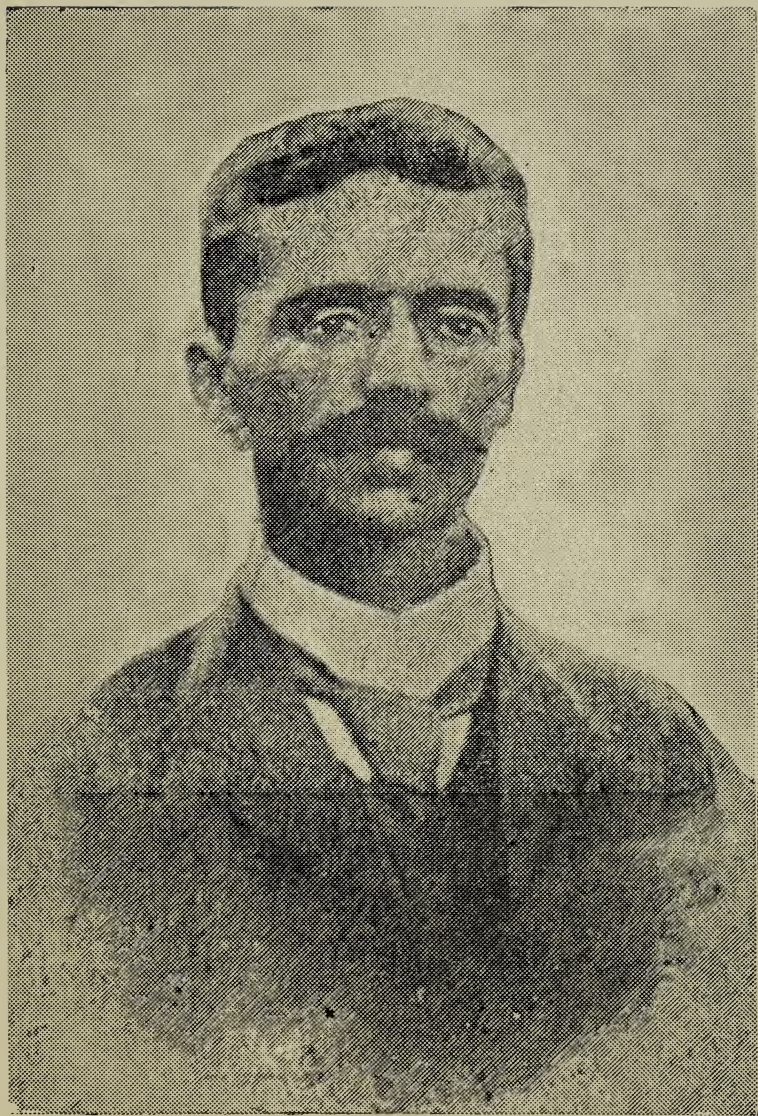
This was the man of whom a leading citizen of the day remarked that no other writer in Kingston moved him to equal respect, because everything that Tom MacDermot wrote as a journalist was brave, honest and impartial.

I have made a search through the early files of the JAMAICA TIMES for evidences of his work. Though he was on the staff of the paper before January, 1900, that month was the first in which his name appeared on the editorial page as assistant editor. Not until the issue of September 17, 1904, was he announced as full editor. It is impossible

to list the news stories, special articles and editorials that were written by him, for he rarely signed that sort of material. When he contributed a poem, it was printed as by Tom Redcam. He also used various nom-de-plumes, such as The Celt under which he ran a column of local literary news and criticism.

All the same, it is fairly easy to identify his style in the more significant prose pieces. The paper was a larger medium than any former weekly had been in this country. It offered sixteen pages from the start and often ran to twenty and to twenty-four pages. MacDermot enriched it with personality sketches, analyses of current events and features designed for entertainment, which were of magazine rather than newspaper quality. His comments on public affairs were constructive and invariably liberal in spirit. When civil servants or politicians needed to be rapped over the knuckles, he struck firmly. Colonial Office policies generally got his support, but when he thought them harmful to Jamaica he did not balk at saying so.

His eagerness to encourage and develop young writers, notably the poets, was warm-hearted, unflagging. He had had a precursor in W. P. Livingstone of the *GLENER*, as I have mentioned. But with the best will in the world Livingstone could not feel the Jamaican quality — or lack of it — in a contribution as acutely as MacDermot did. Broadly I may say that Livingstone tended to foster imitation English poetry, while the foundations of an indigenous school of poetry were laid by MacDermot. That the latter's manner in his own verse was frequently derived does not spoil my case. His matter was native, and he urged the young who came under his influence to be as native as they felt it in them to be, both in manner and matter.



THOMAS HENRY MacDERMOTT

I met him at the beginning of January, 1903, and I have made note elsewhere of the occasion, as follows: "MacDermot gave me a welcome to Kingston that was phrased almost fervidly, and instead of talking to me about the difficulties ahead of me before I could become a good reporter, he complimented me on my choice of local themes for my poetry and said that it was the duty of rising talents to help create a Jamaican literature." He and I were friends from that day. After I left for New York, I kept in touch with him by correspondence and saw him on my last two visits to the Island before his health broke down.

He printed in the *TIMES* some of Claude McKay's poems, which were in dialect and were published here in a volume entitled *CONSTAB BALLADS*. Undoubtedly he helped this writer to make the best use of his gifts and so prepared the way for McKay's career in the United States. MacDermot accepted a number of H. G. de Lisser's early articles. He gave a hearing to every good poet among his contemporaries, and through their admiration of his ideals and his work a stamp was transmitted to many who were too young to have had personal contact with him.

His social-service efforts were divided between groups that assisted discharged prisoners and seamen, and also the young peoples' guild of the Anglican church he attended. The first-named perhaps engaged him the most deeply. He was one of the founders of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society that still functions effectively in Kingston, and as I remember he poured out more energy in this cause than he had to spare. The Sailors' Reading Room and rescue mission conducted by Mrs. Denniston claimed other evenings from him. He seldom missed a meeting of the church guild.

On the day of the great earthquake in January, 1907, Tom MacDermot was in his upstairs office at the rear of the Times building when the blow fell a little after 2 P.M. Durie, as it happened, had just gone to the press room below. That part of the structure was overlooked by the three-storey Desnoes warehouse, and tons of masonry from the latter at once collapsed upon the flimsier Times building, wrecking and in part burying it. Tom was crushed at his desk by debris. A falling beam injured his spine. His left leg was pinned to the floor by an immense snarl of stone, plaster and wood. He lost consciousness, but recovered it before long and saw that entry to the office was blocked. Other seismic shocks took place. He could hear the cries of the wounded and dying, and presently there were warning screams of, "Fire! Fire!" He regarded himself as probably doomed. It turned out that his was the last life in the building to be saved, and that did not occur until almost three hours later.

The rescuers dug frantically at the debris and finally cleared a space around him. But it appeared impossible to free his leg, and he was told that amputation was the only way out. Tom had been suffering excruciating pain, but his mind was clear. He refused to allow them to cut off his leg. When informed later that the front part of the Times building was in flames and that he must soon burn to death if he stayed there, he reversed his decision. One of his sisters, however, had arrived and she implored the rescuers to make one more effort. This was done, and by a seeming miracle he was pulled loose.

Durie had escaped with bruises, though he had been pinned against a wall by an avalanche of rubbish. He did relief work for a couple of days, then went to Montego

Bay and bought the printing equipment of a small paper called the *NORTHERN NEWS*. Only one issue of the *TIMES* was missed. It reappeared on January 26 as a single sheet. The following week the edition was of four pages, and Tom writing from a folding chair had already resumed his work for the paper. Typically, his first contribution was a plea for justice to Governor Swettenham, whose methods had been severely condemned, by Durie among others. Tom felt that Swettenham had done no more than err, "a little in judgment, a great deal in tact . . . I give no partisan support to the Governor; but I do appeal to Jamaicans to be fair. It is easy looking back to see faults and imagine we could do better. It is easy but ignoble to try to make a sacrifice of someone."

The attitude was a profoundly generous one, seeing that the Englishman, Durie, his employer, wrote in the adjoining column: "The Colonial Office, it is stated, has called upon Governor Swettenham to send in his resignation. The British Government would have been sadly lacking if they had not done something to mark their disapproval."

Tom MacDermot rallied from the hurts he had received, but he never again had good health. The injury to the spine led to agonising complications. His always poor eyesight failed steadily; after a few years he had to do most of his writing by dictation, and in the end he went blind. His sufferings were known only to himself and a few intimate friends. This period of his life was assuaged by his happy marriage to Miss Kathleen O'Connell, whom he met just before or shortly after the earthquake. She stood between him and a darkening world. No children were born of the union.

In 1913 MacDermot was appointed to a seat on the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica. He took

his membership very seriously, at once proposed changes in the rules that would make the library more available to the public and got his ideas adopted. Despite his poor health he served, with brief interruptions, until 1922.

One of his dreams had been to spend a long holiday in England. He had richly earned it, and in the summer of 1914 he had actually bought steamship tickets. The outbreak of the first World War caused him to cancel his reservation, because he felt that his duty lay at his editorial desk at such a crisis. The ensuing year he had a fainting fit in the office, was taken home and thereafter did nearly all of his work from his house. He wrote me in July, 1919: "I have been suffering very badly from my eyesight, and I cannot look at proofs at all. In fact I dictate everything and have everything read to me. I am thankful, however, that in general health I am much better than I was for some eight or nine months. They were indeed 'ghastly grim,' as I remember a quaint old book describing such dolours of body and nerves."

While on a visit to Jamaica in the summer of 1921, I saw him and was painfully impressed by his physical condition. In 1922 the doctors ordered him to go to London for treatment. It was under those tragic conditions that he at last made the voyage he had promised himself. His acquaintances know very little about the eleven long years that followed. Tom spent most of the time in a nursing home, where he died on October 8, 1933. His body was cremated, the ashes brought home to Jamaica and buried in Halfway Tree churchyard.

The Poetry League of Jamaica, founded in 1923, by men and women who felt that they owed much to him, had decided in 1933 to proclaim "Tom Redcam" Poet

Laureate of Jamaica. His death occurred just before the date set for the ceremony and the title was conferred posthumously. This action was criticised, in some circles, as being unofficial. It has since been accepted by common consent.

MacDermot's literary work, apart from journalism, must be rated in the following order of merit: poetry, essays, fiction. His stature has not been appreciated because the difficulties of his life left him little time to polish most of the verse he wrote. When he was nineteen he had a poem entitled JAMAICA printed as a brochure. Twenty years later he published a long short story, BECKA'S BUCKRA BABY, in a pocket-size edition labelled No. 1 of the All Jamaica Library, a project which had little success; and then an ambitious novel, ONE BROWN GIRL AND—. None of these titles gave him fame in the history of Island letters. The early poem was youthful, as might be expected. The stories had their merits, but the writing of fiction was not MacDermot's forte. The dialect in ONE BROWN GIRL AND — is often pungent. Here is a revivalist, praying: "Lord, lick him. Lick sin. Tek up you biggest stick and lick hard; and here is me, you servant Raphael, you pen dog, to run and bark and bite, and head off de sinner dem, so deah can't run away and mus' stan' up and tek you chastisement."

His mature verse was jotted down as it came to him, and although he allowed a great deal of it to slip into print unrevised, in his own newspaper and other mediums, he appears to have planned to go over it all at leisure. Unfortunately, only some of the pieces received his careful attention, and they stand in proof of his force as a poet. The rest are cripples, more or less; they are victims of the

incessant drive of daily toil that enslaved their author. MacDermot's drama on Christopher Columbus was chiseled to the approximate form that he intended. But neither this drama nor his finest poems appeared as books during his lifetime. They had to wait until the present year, when the Poetry League of Jamaica issued them together, through the Pioneer Press, under the title of *ORANGE VALLEY AND OTHER POEMS*. The introduction by J. E. Clare McFarlane contains a detailed critique of the verse, and it is unnecessary that I should give one here. But there are a few points I want to emphasise.

MacDermot, or Tom Redcam to use the name he adopted as a poet, was moved primarily by an intense feeling for the glamour of Jamaica's past and the future that it indicated for the country. He did not merely set history to rhyme. He employed it in an effort to give Jamaica a national soul. Oddly enough, he skipped the middle period, except for his rather mechanical *AUGUST HYMN*—the decades which these sketches of mine have covered in the main — and concentrated upon the earliest records, the pageant of the Eighteenth Century, and a certain amount of modern commentary. His least impressive reactions were to World War I, which excited him when his health was failing to a sort of jingoism in which his muse lost its way. On the other hand, he worked out during the same period a sure technique of philosophical narrative in blank verse, exemplified at its noblest in *A LEGIONARY OF LIFE*. Tom Redcam's occasional love lyrics do not carry much conviction, being sing-song echoes of Tennyson and even of Tom Moore.

His Columbus play, *SAN GLORIA*, is altogether admirable, and it could stand comparison with the work of any of the lesser Elizabethan dramatists. The episode chosen

is that of the tragic climax of the Discoverer's fourth and last voyage, when he was wrecked on the north coast of Jamaica and spent a year there as a castaway. San (grammatically it should be Santa) Gloria is the present St. Ann's Bay. Bartholomew Columbus, a brother, is of the party, and so is the famous man-at-arms Diego Méndez who wrote the story in his old age. The brothers Porras weary of their enfeebled commander's orders and start a revolt. All this is historically true.

Tom Redcam makes of it a splendid drama, in which Columbus himself is portrayed with masterly touches and every other character emerges sharply defined. Méndez and Francisco Porras, in particular — loyal servitor and villain — are realised just as fully as the hero. The thing is conceived in poetical terms, of course, but the situations are fascinating and there is enough action to make it effective on the stage. With a little cutting it could be, and should be, produced in Jamaica.

MacDermot believed absolutely that his mission was to serve his country, and that all his approaches to this end were important. I leave the last word on him to an editorial that appeared in the *DAILY GLEANER* as recently as June 29, 1949: "For many years Thomas Henry MacDermot was an important intellectual force in this country. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any man in the history of the country has exercised the same degree of intellectual influence. Far more than any other, he succeeded in moulding the minds of his contemporaries."



Herbert George de Lisser

IT was logical that the conservative era after Morant Bay should give birth to its own supreme exponent in the realm of ideas. I use the phrase "give birth to" advisedly, for I do not mean a man who helped to create the era, as Nuttall did, or who coming to it as an adult concluded that he liked and would support it. I mean one bred under the new conditions. Logical, too, that a hundred years of robust journalism in Jamaica should produce a brilliant, versatile editor and writer capable of bending a majority of the public to his will. The two things were combined in the person of a single individual: Herbert George de Lisser. He was no idealist, no poet, such as T. H. MacDermot was, and the latter outdid him in moulding thought that had a bearing on the future. De Lisser was conservative spokesman at a time when Jamaica was conservative, and so exercised far more immediate power.

Interestingly, but not uniquely, he began as a liberal, even as a sympathiser with Fabian Socialism. It takes a mind that has not been afraid of experimentation to back the established regime intelligently. My friend H.G.D. would doubtless have endorsed the quip that it was a credit to any one's heart to have been a Socialist, but that a Socialist of forty was a case of arrested development.

Herbert George de Lisser was born at Falmouth on

December 9, 1878, his name being identical with that of his father, though he was the second son. The family was of very old Jamaica ancestry, Portuguese-Jewish on the paternal side, with a modicum of African blood. There was also a Hebrew strain on the other side, H.G.D.'s mother having been a Miss Isaacs, of Kingston. A friendship of generations caused the eldest son to be named Barrett de Lisser, after the Barrett family of the north coast from which Elizabeth Barrett Browning was descended.

The elder H. G. de Lisser had been the proprietor and editor of a paper called *THE TRELAWNY*, which he published in Falmouth in the interests of planters and penkeepers. After some years of success, he opposed on principle the importation of East Indian labour. Most of his subscribers held a contrary view, and the paper failed. H. G. de Lisser, Sr., moved to Kingston, where he worked on several journals before he was appointed editor of the *DAILY GLEANER*. His independent character may be judged from a clash he had with Richard Hill Jackson, a leading politician of the day and Mayor of Kingston. Jackson asked him what he thought of his latest speech.

"It was good," replied de Lisser, "but you put a little too much of the demagogue in it."

"Do you mean to call me a damn' demagogue?" protested Jackson, bristling.

"If you want to have it so, all right — a *damn'* demagogue!" replied de Lisser coolly.

He was the first editor of the *GLEANER* to make it an important daily. Previously it had been little more than an advertising circular which its competitors outshone.

The younger Herbert George de Lisser began his education in Falmouth; as a small boy he was entered at the school kept by the Misses Knibb while T. H. MacDermot, eight years his senior, was still a pupil there. Then he was taken to Kingston and placed in the Collegiate School under the famous teacher William Morrison. He remained only until the age of fourteen, when his father died, leaving practically no money, and young H.G.D. had to go to work. It appears that for short spells he was clerk in a drug store opposite the old Sollas Market and in an ironmonger's on King Street. A little training in the realism of city life did him good rather than harm, as his novels were to show.

But his next job set him squarely on his career. He became a library assistant at the Institute of Jamaica, and he used the chance to complete his own education. It is said that there was never so voracious a student of the books at the Institute as the young de Lisser. He taught himself French and Spanish, and read deeply in political economy, biology, philosophy and general psychology. It was absolutely no drawback to him not to have had much of a formal education. Possibly it was an advantage, for it enabled him to feel that he had shaped the tools of his intellect to suit himself.

He remained three years at the Institute and then did proof-reading on the GLEANER for two years. Shortly after the JAMAICA TIMES was started, he got on to the staff of that paper where he and MacDermot again crossed paths. There was wide divergence in their temperaments, and though they were friendly they did not become intimates. MacDermot, however, at once saw the native ability of the twenty-one-year-old reporter and often praised it.

De Lisser's next move was to the **DAILY TELEGRAPH**, under the editorship of Robert C. Guy, who set him to writing descriptive and special articles on a variety of subjects, and made him assistant editor. The newcomer sprang overnight into prominence. The trend away from the dead level of anonymity had just begun in local journalism, and his was a featured name.

We have reached the point where I can give personal impressions of H.G.D. But I wish first to quote Reginald W. Thompson on a slightly earlier period. Thompson, who was once a crony to the point of being known by many Kingstonians as de Lisser's shadow, wrote a short memoir in which he said that his friend used to hold forth to a group that met in the Victoria Gardens. It will be agreed that the habitués of that park must have been of a very different type from those who haunt it now. De Lisser also foregathered with practically the same group in a jewellery shop on Orange Street run by one Chaves. He was, according to Thompson, merciless in criticising the intellectual limitations of even the most experienced opponent. He had no bump of reverence, but — and this is a good phrase — “a passion for reality, a love of the fact and of truth.” De Lisser also was vain and liked to be on the winning side. He was irritable, and above all things he hated boredom. Thompson found him a bit overwhelming at first, did not think he could get along with him, but soon changed his mind.

I met de Lisser in 1903 when he was on the **TELEGRAPH** and I was a boy reporter on the **GLEANER**. He and a friend of his own age named Gerald Hamilton were living in a small cottage on Rosedale Avenue near West Race Course. A frequent visitor was Walter Parker,

H.G.D.'s brother-in-law, then sub-editor of the TELEGRAPH. Others dropped in, including Thompson and, very rarely, MacDermot. I was struck by the exuberance of H.G.D., his sophistication and glittering talk, marked by a note of facetious cynicism and a certain theatricality. He was easily the most vivid personality of the coterie.

He and Hamilton wore short, curly black beards that made them look like French colonials of the period. Rumour had it that H.G.D. had grown his because Sydney Olivier, then Colonial Secretary, wore a beard, and that Hamilton had imitated H.G.D. At all events, the fact that he was full of enthusiasm for Olivier was what brought deLisser and myself together. I told him that I had reported a speech by Olivier in the Legislative Council and had been greatly impressed. He commended me for my interest and summarised for me the lectures on Fabian Socialism which the Colonial Secretary had recently given at the Institute of Jamaica. I think that to both of us, as we talked it over, the doctrine was less exciting than the man. We were moved by a leader type who had not hesitated to shock the prosy citizens of Kingston with his theories. Despite the difference in our ages, H.G.D. and I formed a friendship at that time which was never shaken by our clashes of opinion over large issues in years to come.

W. P. Livingstone was still editor of the GLEANER, but was about to resign in order to start his own weekly, the LEADER. This he did at the beginning of 1904 and took me along as sub-editor. He had been well aware of deLisser's talent, had published some of his earliest articles and predicted that he would have a career. He may have recommended him to the Gleaner Company as

his successor. In any case, Livingstone made him assistant editor in 1903, and the following year, before he was twenty-six years old, de Lisser became editor of the *GLEANER*. His was to be the major journalistic voice in Jamaica for the next forty years, challenged only by Guy and MacDermot at the start and by the expression of a new school of political thought at the end.

The *LEADER* had a short life. I went to the United States, and for many a day I saw my Jamaica colleagues only in passing when I made brief journeys home.

The first big crisis that de Lisser faced, in common with every other man who was in a key position in the Island, was the earthquake of 1907. He handled the special problems of the *GLEANER* with skill and aplomb. The larger duties of rescue work and reconstruction threw him into constant touch with Archbishop Nuttall, chairman of the general relief committee. H.G.D. had long esteemed the Archbishop. Now he realized that this masterly planner had one of the most forceful minds in the community. As I have shown in my sketch of him, it was largely through Nuttall's efforts that Sydney Olivier was appointed Governor of Jamaica, replacing Swettenham who had bungled the earthquake situation. Nothing could have suited de Lisser better. Two men whom he sincerely admired now occupied the summits of influence in Jamaica. He wrote enthusiastically in their support, and he absorbed statecraft from both of them.

Olivier became his friend. There could be no question of the opinions of that strong personality being coloured by a newspaper editor. But after Olivier left office in 1913, de Lisser began to exercise a certain ascendancy in the views formed by governors. The *DAILY*

TELEGRAPH had perished, and attempts to launch rival newspapers such as the MAIL, the CHRONICLE and the STANDARD were successful only for brief periods. The GLEANER entered upon its long, almost unexampled monopoly of the daily field in this country. When there is only one medium of news, one editorial voice that can reach the breakfast table, few readers are disposed to question its rightness. De Lisser might well have been able to dominate if he had had half-a-dozen competitors; without them he rode, as the saying goes, "high, wide and handsome."

An editor usually relapses, under such circumstances, into mere pontificating. One of the remarkable things about de Lisser was the vigour and sound technique with which he expressed himself, exactly as if he had had to beat down challengers. This made for good reading. The style employed in his thousands of editorials would repay analysis. Not content with the serious approach, he turned out a column several times a week, entitled *Random Jottings* and signed H.G.D. He let himself go in the *Jottings*, was humorous, sarcastic and gay. Any subject was his oyster, and to the majority of Jamaicans that column was his most enjoyable writing, the work which keeps his memory green. Sometimes he carried over the same spirit into an unsigned editorial, and there could never be the least doubt who had written it. The style was special, inimitable.

I do not have the space to quote any of them here. Nor do they lend themselves to amputation. Each is a vignette of local colour, of political or social satire. What is needed is an anthology of H.G.D.'s *Random Jottings*.

De Lisser went to the Isthmus of Panama while the

canal was being dug, interviewed President Theodore Roosevelt who had come on a tour of inspection, and wrote a series of special articles. Naturally enough, the personality of Roosevelt captivated him. He liked strong egos that expressed themselves in action. In 1914 he was again in Panama for the formal opening of the canal, an event that was cancelled by the outbreak of World War I.

He made a trip to Cuba in 1909, and as the outcome of his observations wrote his first book, *IN JAMAICA AND CUBA*. In 1910 he was elected a member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica, where he had been a junior clerk less than twenty years before. From this point on, his life story is complicated by four major interests, which overlapped but can best be treated separately. I list them in the order in which I shall take them up:

His work for the Institute of Jamaica.

His work for the trade and commerce of the Island, through the Jamaica Imperial Association.

His politics, culminating in opposition to the rise of the nationalist movement.

His books.

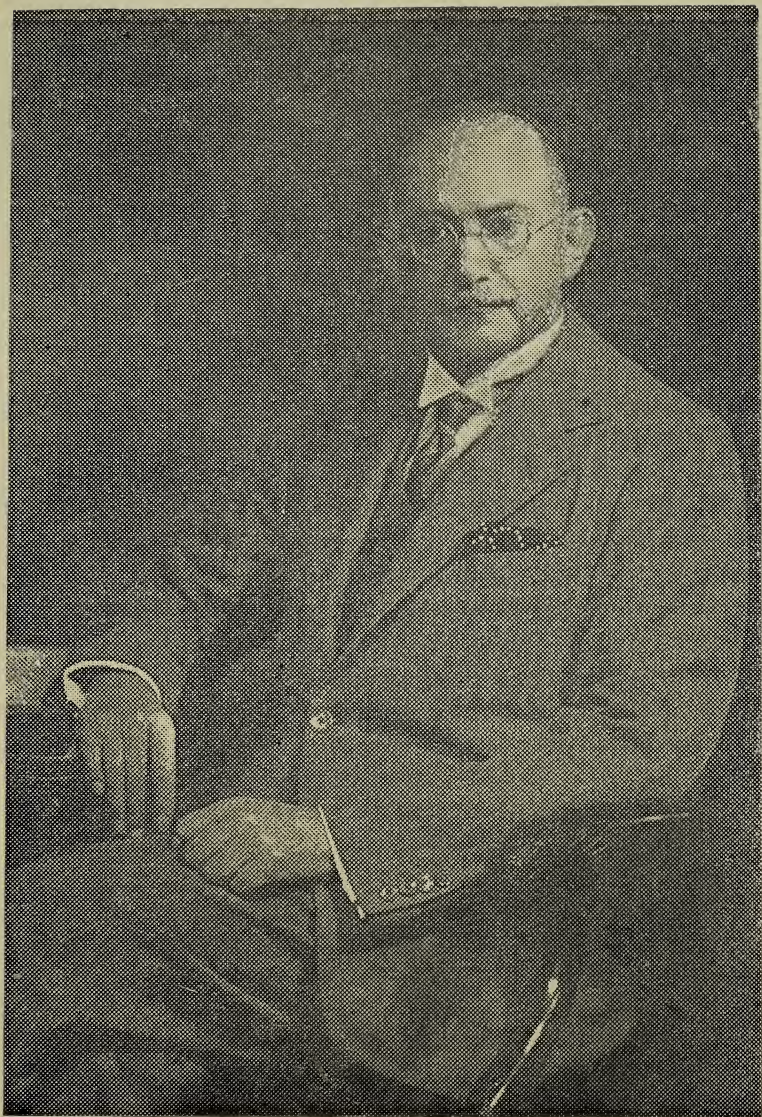
De Lisser served twenty-two years in all on the Board of Governors of the Institute, and for seventeen years of that time was its chairman. His first term was for four years, during which he was as active as an ordinary member well could be, and in 1914 retired by operation of the law that limited tenure of the post. He was returned in 1920, became chairman in 1922 and served continuously in the highest office until 1937, except for brief

technical interruptions required by the law. His devotion to the progress of the Institute as the Island's cultural centre may be called the chief altruistic effort of his life.

The Secretary and Librarian was the late Frank Cundall, an enthusiast at his job who had practically created the West India Reference Library and the Gallery of Historical Jamaica Portraits. Cundall was a scholar, a gifted compiler of data, and an antiquarian. His historical publications were important, and one of them, *JAMAICA UNDER THE SPANIARDS*, written in collaboration with the late Joseph L. Pietersz, contained source material never collected before. Pietersz, a native-born Jamaican of Dutch West Indian descent, was on the Institute's Board of Governors for years and was its authority on Spanish texts. De Lisser heartily supported both Cundall and Pietersz. Under this regime the West India Reference Library achieved pre-eminence on the subject of Britain's activities in the region for the past three centuries. But H.G.D. did more than give backing to others. He was a wizard at raising funds. The financing and completion of the science wing of the Institute was mainly due to his efforts.

When Cundall was in his late seventies, the voice of a new generation made itself heard on the Board. It charged him, in effect, with having become an old fogey, tried to force his resignation, and included de Lisser in the attack. Cundall hung on until he died towards the end of 1937, but de Lisser had retired indignantly from the chairmanship and in 1938 quitted the Board.

His work with the Jamaica Imperial Association was, of course, a much larger canvas. This organization was founded in December, 1917, by a group of planters,



HERBERT GEORGE deLISSER, C.M.G.

merchants and professional men, led by Arthur W. Farquharson who was later knighted. H.G.D. helped Farquharson with the preliminaries, was appointed general secretary and filled this post until the end of his life.

The professed objects of the Jamaica Imperial Association were to support the West India Committee and other similar bodies in England, to obtain their co-operation, influence public opinion, and in a general way to "deal with all matters which may affect the economic, social, agricultural, industrial or commercial welfare and development of Jamaica or any part thereof." Such a programme could have amounted to little more than debate and wishful thinking. But Sir Arthur W. Farquharson had constructive ideas, and in Herbert George de Lisser he had found a man perfectly equipped to get results abroad. By degrees de Lisser became the special ambassador for Jamaican commerce with Britain, particularly in sugar, rum and bananas. He made frequent trips to London. As early as 1923 he formed the West India Parliamentary Committee there, in which he enlisted Viscount Burnham of the *DAILY TELEGRAPH*, J. H. Thomas and other statesmen. This, in alliance with existing trade boards concerned with the Islands, was suggestive on a lesser scale of the famous "West India Interest" that had been so powerful in the Eighteenth Century.

During World War I, Jamaica had voted £60,000 a year as a contribution to England's exchequer. De Lisser brought about the diversion of this sum for two years as a subsidy to the local sugar industry. It probably saved the situation when sugar was at its lowest ebb. He obtained trade concessions from England and induced capital to invest in Jamaica. There can be no question

that he mightily served the interests of the planting and business community during the years of depression in the 1920s and 1930s, when help was most needed. Wages remained shockingly low, but it can be argued that without the trade fostered by the Jamaica Imperial Association there would have been less employment. De Lisser took pride in the feeling that he was booming his country, and as he saw it the entire population benefited more or less.

In 1938 the Sugar Manufacturers Association of Jamaica presented him with a silver bowl and a cheque for 500 guineas to mark its appreciation of what he had done for the sugar and rum industries.

The governmental system was perfectly agreeable to H.G.D. during the two decades of his supremacy, which may be dated roughly from 1917 to 1937. He had had his doubts when younger. In his *TWENTIETH CENTURY JAMAICA*, published in 1913, he had written: "Politically, the people of Jamaica are contented enough, but it would be a mistake to imagine that they are inclined to accept as unchangeable the present system of Government. . . . Since 1884, the Government has been steadily encroaching upon the powers of the elected members, while the people of the colony are becoming less and less disposed to be ruled entirely by officials."

As conservative oracle he put such admissions aside. He appeared to believe, in all sincerity, that Jamaicans were losing what little interest they had had in self-determination and that it was better so. He shuddered at the offer of an Executive Committee made by the Royal Commission headed by the Hon. E. F. L. Wood (later Lord Halifax) in 1922, and he was pleased when the

Legislative Council rejected it. The late J. A. G. Smith's brand of progressiveness was harmless talky-talky to him, a blowing off of steam. He wanted to hear nothing stronger than that.

I was in Jamaica in the early 1930s. Naturally I called on H.G.D., whom I found at the height of his powers, though the years had wrought a few exterior changes in him. He had recently sacrificed his beard, and with only a cropped moustache he looked, when his face was in repose, somewhat like a successful lawyer or banker. But temperamentally he was the old Bohemian H.G.D. He loved to gesture and to give extravagant turns to his speech. His eyes twinkled in conversation. He carried a cane and walked with an individual swagger.

I had published an article in an American magazine, in which I had raised the question of self-government for the British Caribbean territories. We did not discuss this at first. One afternoon, however, while I was browsing among the stacks of the West India Reference Library at the Institute, H.G.D. came in and asked what I was hunting for. Material to buttress an argument favouring a new political movement in Jamaica, I replied, and added that the awakening autonomist sentiment was overdue.

"That is the greatest nonsense on earth," he exclaimed. "There will never be such a political party here. The people are not interested, and if the thing threatened to come up I would prevent it."

"You couldn't," I said. "The present period of unconcern is simply a phenomenon, an interlude. Even more than most peoples, West Indians have politics in their blood."

"I tell you, it shall not occur except over my dead body," he cried.

"Herbert," I retorted, "your dead body will never be found on any barricade."

He stiffened and looked really angry for a moment. Then he threw his head back, laughed and clapped me on the shoulder. We both knew that his own love of hyperbole had been the core of the jest.

I came back to the Island in 1937 and again in 1939. The Jamaica Progressive League of New York had been demanding self-government. The disturbances at Frome had taken place, Alexander Bustamante had loomed above the throng, and the People's National Party had been formed under the leadership of Norman W. Manley. The lines for a long, hard campaign had been drawn, and de Lisser and I were on opposite sides. He refused point-blank to admit that the mood of the country had indeed changed. He wrote endless columns of polemics to sustain his case. I have no intention of reviewing them here. This is a sketch of de Lisser's life, and not a study of the nationalist movement. It will be pertinent, nevertheless, to give one sample of his approach. The following is from an editorial by him in the *GLENER* on June 20, 1938:

"From complete Self-Government for Jamaica Good Lord, deliver us. Not even Full Representative Government can be considered at a time when, to use a colloquialism, the tail is wagging the dog, and tub-thumping is practically the order of the day. . . . An advanced political Constitution, particularly Self-Government, is entirely out of the question when but a few weeks ago the capital of Jamaica was threatened by mob rule." And

in variations of this theme H.G.D. went on and on, over and over again.

He often singled me out for admonishment, but good-humouredly; and I hit back at him in the same spirit. We neither of us saw any reason why political differences should affect our private regard for each other.

But a bitter feeling against him was rife among the young people of the new politics in Jamaica. The opposition to him at the Institute had been one of the earliest symptoms. In January, 1938, I heard him flouted at a large meeting of the first Readers and Writers Club, over which he was presiding. Insulting questions were asked him from the floor. It was gross ingratitude on the part of the group, for he had raised the funds needed to start the club and had accepted the presidency for a year because he had been begged to do so. He resigned the day after the meeting, and few of the members had the grace to send him personal apologies.

Such attacks, to be sure, did not lessen the influence of H.G.D. in high places here. He slowly and reluctantly began to give way, only when he saw that the Colonial Office itself was disposed to favour a more advanced Constitution for Jamaica. In the face of a semi-official forecast, he wrote stubbornly that he was still of the opinion that the old Constitution "could well have lasted with quite satisfactory results for many years to come." He admitted that unforeseen developments had altered the case, and he let it be known that thenceforth his fight would be against the "absurdity" of aspiring to Dominion status.

By an irony of fate, de Lisser's career ended on this note. He died a few months before the Constitution was

formally proclaimed and the first general elections held under universal suffrage.

H.G.D. was the author of a long list of books, beginning with *IN JAMAICA AND CUBA* (1910) and *TWENTIETH-CENTURY JAMAICA* (1913). Both these were published locally. They were designed chiefly to inform outsiders about general conditions, the comment being that of a shrewd journalist. It is worth noting that when sixty-five per cent. of the Island's trade was with America (in 1912), he believed that "the wish of Jamaica to become absorbed by the United States will grow;" but when the trend changed after World War I and, largely through the efforts of the Jamaica Imperial Association, commerce with the United Kingdom became paramount, H.G.D. proclaimed the absolute devotion of his country to Britain. In business he did not allow romance to cloud his practical judgment.

His next two books were *JANE'S CAREER* and *SUSAN PROUDLEIGH*, realistic, humorous novels of the life of the poor, issued by Methuen & Co., London. In my opinion, these mark the summit of his purely literary achievement. They are excellent folk novels, and no matter how fashions in writing may alter they will be reprinted and reread for generations.

JANE'S CAREER is the story of a simple black country girl who at the age of fifteen comes to Kingston with a mistress to learn domestic service. Jane is the sort of slavey on the premises known as a "school girl". But she catches on quickly, runs away after a few months, goes to live in a yard room in a lane and gets a job pasting labels on bottles. The married foreman tries to persuade her to let him set her up in a little house of her own.

She is about to succumb for economic reasons when the right man comes along and does as much for her, with love thrown in. The couple end by marrying in church, a triumph of which Jane had scarcely ventured to dream.

The plot of SUSAN PROUDLEIGH is somewhat more complicated. Susan is a handsome brown girl living with her family in a Kingston lane. Her lover goes to Colon, promising to send for her, but he fails to make good. Susan meets a flashier type at a picnic at Cumberland Pen, who does end by taking her to the Isthmus of Panama at the time the canal is being dug. Drama ensues among the old and new lovers, as well as a steady middle-aged fellow whose intentions towards Susan are strictly honourable. She marries the last-mentioned, but is bored by him, and when he is killed by a landslide in the Culebra Cut she gladly returns to Jamaica with the second lover, the most exciting if not the most virtuous man of the three.

These tales may seem naive in short summaries, but they are far from being so. Truer portrayals of lower middle-class and proletarian life in Kingston have never been put on paper. The humour is racy, the tragedy handled with just the right touch of fatalism which the poor wear as armour. We are not asked to believe that Jane and Susan are little plaster saints. Jane "falls" once, through inexperience, with the worthless nephew of her employer, and later she has a baby as a matter of course, though as yet unmarried. Susan makes no bones about the terms on which she accepts her lovers. The minor characters are drawn with verity, particularly the boastful yet timid father of Susan. The background displays the closest observation.

W. Somerset Maugham wrote to the author: "I

should like to tell you how much I enjoyed your two books; they are full of life and character and you give a picture of the Jamaican native which impresses one very strongly as true. They are also, a trait not too common in modern fiction, extremely readable."

H.G.D.'s next novel was **TRIUMPHANT SQUALITONE**, a comedy of politics and would-be statesmen that borders on travesty without losing its grip as a story. In 1920 he founded an annual named **PLANTERS' PUNCH**, in which he made it a practice to print a full-length book of his own each year, with publication in England usually following. His best and most popular work of this period is **THE WHITE WITCH OF ROSEHALL**, an adaptation of the true tale of Annie Palmer, a cruel mistress killed by her slaves just before Emancipation. It was praised by Rudyard Kipling.

PLANTERS' PUNCH turned out to be a highly successful periodical, was continued by de Lisser until his death and kept going for a few years afterward.

Other titles by him include **REVENGE**, **UNDER THE SUN**, **THE CUP AND THE LIP**, **MORGAN'S DAUGHTER**, **JAMAICA AND THE GREAT WAR**, and **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF JAMAICA**.

In 1920 he was made a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, it being announced that the distinction had been awarded him for his literary work. He was very proud of his C.M.G. Years later Haiti decorated him with its medal of *Honneur et Mérite* in recognition of a series of articles he had written denouncing the massacre of Haitians by troops of the Dominican Republic just within the latter's frontier.

De Lisser married in 1909 Ellen Gwendoline Gunter, youngest daughter of Thomas Gunter, a former director

of the Jamaica Government Railway. There were no children. Mrs. deLisser was partly of French descent; her maternal ancestors, the Desbrosses, had escaped to Jamaica during the successful slave revolution in Saint Domingue, now Haiti. She accompanied her husband on all his subsequent voyages, notably to the Imperial Press Conferences held in Canada in 1920 and in London in 1930. Praise was heaped on de Lisser by his colleagues at these gatherings; he was regarded as being at least the peer of any newspaper editor in the Empire.

His church affiliation was with the Presbyterians, but he gave support to other denominations. He told R. W. Thompson that he felt he could best be described as a philosophical Theist. He became a member of the Board of Directors of the Jamaica Mutual Life Assurance Society, and was the first Honorary President of the Jamaica Press Association.

Late in 1942, a heart condition undermined his health and he was forced to retire from the active editorship of the *GLEANER*. Articles of opinion for the paper went on pouring from his pen, and he did not give up his work for the Jamaica Imperial Association. In December, the following year, he had a dangerous bout of illness, announced in some quarters to have been fatal; but he rallied and described humorously in a column of *Random Jottings* how it felt to be reported dead. The end came on May 18, 1944, when he was sixty-five and a half years old. He was buried in Halfway Tree churchyard.

The eulogies published at such a moment are seldom safe guides to the truth. But those accorded Herbert George de Lisser had real significance. The *GLEANER* said in an editorial that he was "by far the most eminent

figure in the journalism" of the British West Indies. "He stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries, he was an obvious and acknowledged leader. One of such talent as he possessed would have made his mark anywhere. . . . History will rank him among Jamaica's greatest sons, perhaps adding the footnote that his death coincided with the close of the age to which he belonged."

CATHOLIC OPINION declared: "He was *sui generis*; and perhaps the highest tribute that can be paid him as a journalist is to say that although in recent years the development of political thought in Jamaica made it inevitable that many would disagree with his views, everybody read him — and not from mere curiosity, but because what he wrote was always well worth reading."

And PUBLIC OPINION, which had opposed him, stated: "He had lost the gift of adaptability. Yet when we consider the courage with which Mr. de Lisser had been the architect of his own career; had as a young man identified himself with what were then minority causes, because he believed they were in the best interests of his country; we do not doubt that had he in 1938 been on the threshold instead of at the end of his active life, he would have been among the leaders of progressive thought in the country."

Friends and antagonists were not so far apart in rating the genius of H.G.D.



POSTSCRIPT

The foregoing sketches are in no sense final appraisals, though taken together they do constitute a chain of evidence and a viewpoint which I believe to be historically sound. Jamaica's annals have never been put in order, and the existing surveys are so much patchwork. W. J. Gardner's *History*, the latest to make a pretence of being complete, brings us down only to 1872. It is coloured by prejudice, and its omissions are glaring.

I had to depend wholly upon research, in the files of newspapers and other original sources, concerning the lives of Edward Jordon and George William Gordon. Many gaps remain unfilled. Archbishop Nuttall, Dr. Love, MacDermot and de Lisser come more or less within my own period. I was able to supplement personal knowledge with documentary records and the reminiscences of friends. But in their cases, also, the pictures are incomplete.

Full-length biographies of all six men are badly needed. The "lives" of Gordon which were rushed into print after his execution are partisan chatter, and Frank Cundall's life of Nuttall is mere chronology. No one of the remaining four has had a volume devoted to him.

I should like to add that it would be easy to draw up a list of six other persons who were noteworthy in Jamaica's story during the century and a quarter covered by my six. For instance: Richard Hill, Robert Osborn, Samuel Constantine Burke, James Mursell Philippo, William Knibb and Thomas Burchell. Or, with emphasis on the Twentieth rather than the Nineteenth Century: S. A. G. Cox, Marcus Garvey, D. Theophilus Wint, Frank Cundall, Sir Arthur W. Farquharson and J. A. G. Smith.

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